



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600059870Z

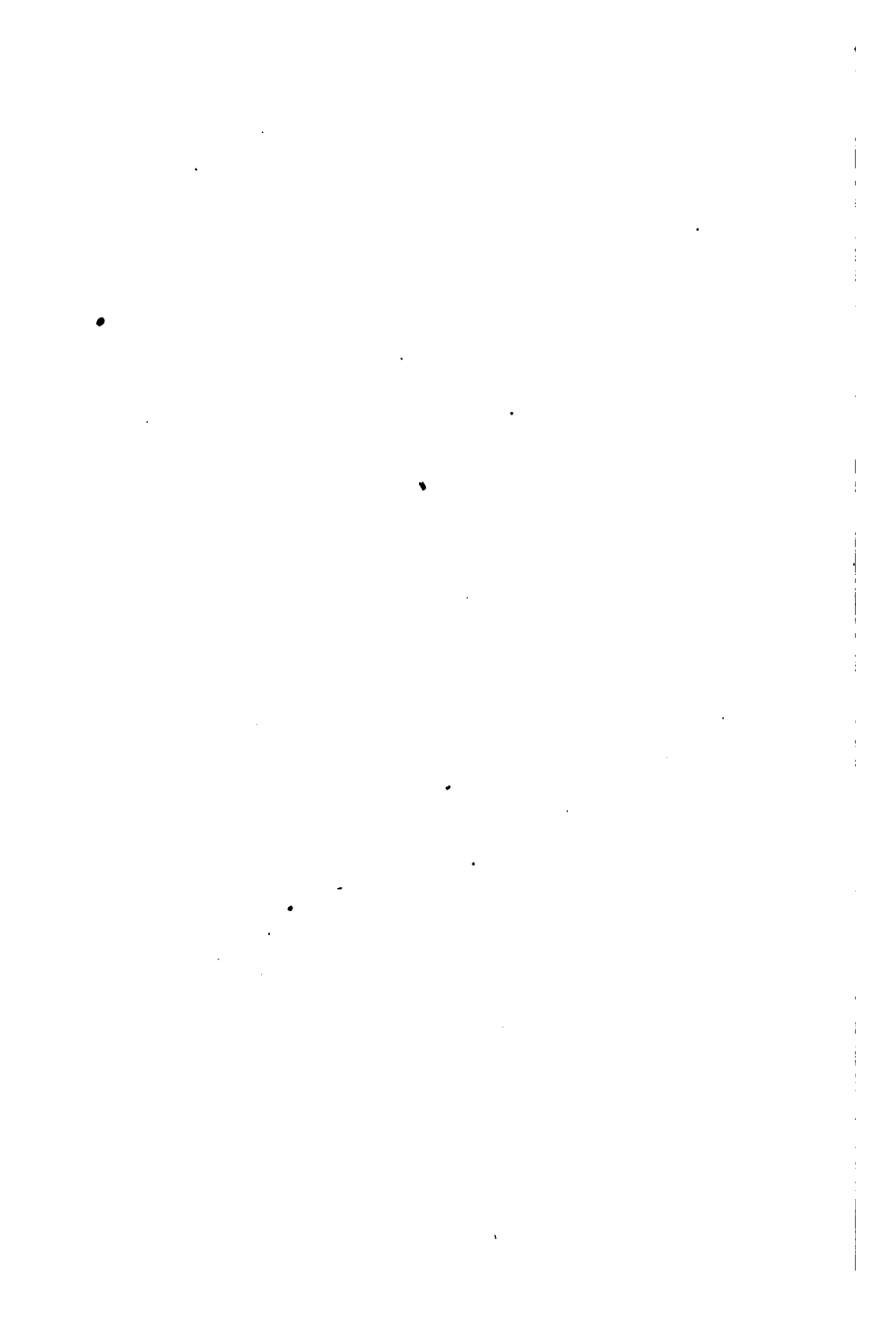


BODLEIAN LIBRARY

OXFORD







PASSAGES IN THE LIFE  
OF  
A FAST YOUNG LADY.

BY  
MRS. GREY,  
AUTHOR OF "THE GAMBLER'S WIFE," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES  
VOL. II.

LONDON:  
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,  
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,  
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.  
1862.

*The right of Translation is reserved.*

250 f. 96.

LONDON

PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.

NEW-STREET SQUARE



PASSAGES  
IN THE  
LIFE OF A FAST YOUNG LADY.

---

CHAPTER I.

SUCH a delicious day! Heavy rain in the night had completely laid the dust and refreshed the atmosphere.

A luxurious carriage was at the door, awaiting the fair one's arrival, and Lord Westover impatiently looking for his beautiful companion, holding in his hand a parasol and bouquet, both unrivalled in perfection, which the *ci-devant jeune homme* presented with the devoted *empressement* of one-and-twenty.



Car was assisted into the front seat of the phaeton by more than one cavalier, and soon might have been seen whirling on at a brisk pace through the balmy air, delighting Lord Westover's ears by the rapturous expressions of delight which burst from her lips whilst she examined the costly little present.

"Is not this lovely?" she at length exclaimed, as she turned round, and held it to the gentlemen seated in the rumble.

Lord Glendinnon, who was anxiously awaiting an opportunity of addressing her, was speedily on the alert. Car's hands were very full during that drive. She had to divide her attention as evenly as possible between her two noble admirers.

"How tiresome it is!" she thought; "I must be extra civil to Lord Westover this morning, after having accepted such a ridiculously expensive present — the very last thing I cared to have. I have a parasol I

like much better, although it is not so absurdly costly."

Poor Lord Westover, and these are all the thanks he really gains for his extravagant generosity. And so it often proves to the giver of presents, if he did but know it — a waste of time, trouble, and money.

"The very last thing I cared to have," is too often the inward ejaculation of a favoured one, whom alone to please had been the anxious desire of the donor.

It is certainly, on the whole, we think, more gratifying to give than to receive.

However, Car acted her part with her usual adroitness in such positions. She pleased both of her companions, and reached Brookwood in the highest spirits.

Although Lord Glendinnon had outlived the days of romantic love at first sight, he nevertheless was quite as susceptible as ever to the attractions of female beauty.

“Love and war” might well have served as the motto of this gallant General, for certainly those two pursuits were, and had ever been, the engrossing business of his existence.

At the mature age of five or six-and-forty, practice had made him perfect in the art of captivation, and his handsome person and insinuating address, proved very powerful arguments to his cause whenever he wished to enslave a heart. In early youth, Lord Glendinnon had been talked into a *mariage de convenance*, but it had not answered; a year or two, and the unsympathising couple were disunited. A legal separation was all that in those more stringent days they could obtain, and so the pair, encumbered by a hated tie, not to be shaken off, pursued their several paths of life.

His Lordship however little cared. He had had quite enough of matrimony, and

could dispense cheerfully with its exacting duties and requirements. He minded not futurity—who was to succeed to his title and estates; any one might have them, when he was gone; what mattered it to him? To enjoy himself whilst he lived, was his sole aim and end.

His existence was one of entire self-indulgence. Fortunately amongst his other inclinations the passion for military fame was strongly interwoven in his nature, and the ardour with which he pursued the duties of a soldier, had perhaps retrieved his character in some degree, from wholly succumbing to the influence of a life of voluptuous self-indulgence.

In a military capacity he was ready to work and act, to face dangers and hardships as cheerfully as any man.

Mounted on his charger, his appearance, so conspicuous from its commanding height



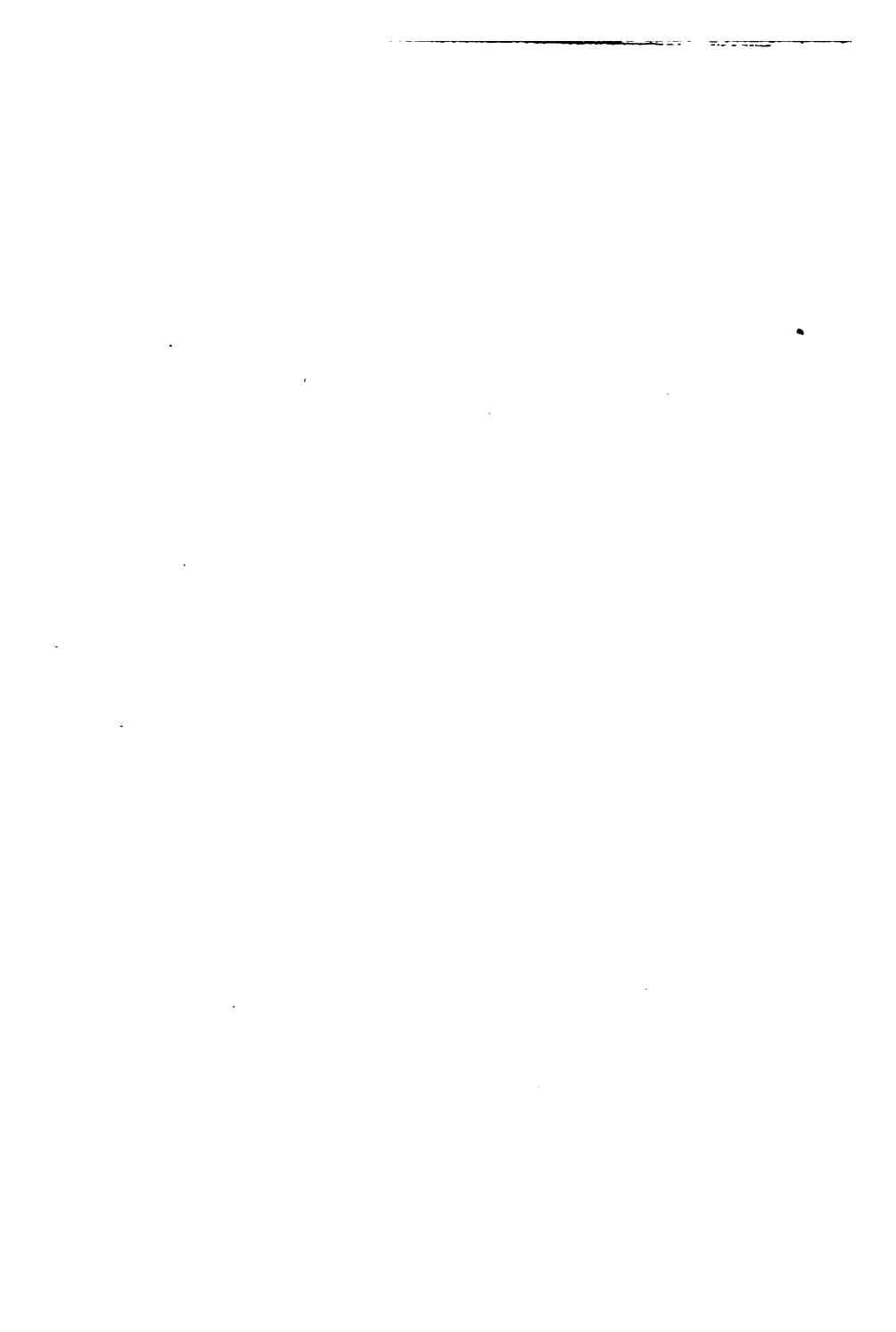
600059870Z



BODLEIAN LIBRARY

OXFORD







PASSAGES IN THE LIFE  
OF  
A FAST YOUNG LADY.

BY  
MRS. GREY,  
AUTHOR OF "THE GAMBLER'S WIFE," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES  
VOL. II.

LONDON:  
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,  
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,  
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.  
1862.

*The right of Translation is reserved.*

250 f. 96.



Sir Hector on no account would have brought Car to Westover, had he imagined it possible that Lord Glendinning was to have been there, and it was with no small degree of impatience that he detected the admiring though covert glances cast upon Caroline during the dinner, glances which the unfortunate father well knew were all detected and appreciated by that arrant flirt, his daughter.

And Lord Glendinning, with his hawk's eye, saw at once the precise state of the case; knew exactly the father's ideas upon the subject; could tell every feeling reflected upon that honest open face; and read too plainly the inmost recesses of Car Eversfield's mind.

He could see at once that she was a creature of passionate impulse, without heart or principle to guide her, and he also saw that she was most beautiful in her style

of youthful, glowing richness of tint, sparkling eyes, and rosy lips, with a form exquisitely modelled, and, alas! (for Lady Julia was not there to admonish), its charms far too lavishly exposed; and he saw, moreover, in her a girl ready to receive from him any degree of incense which it might please his fancy to offer her.

Lord Glendinnon, as we before remarked, was too old to be romantic, and falling in love at first sight was not at all in his category; that is to say, what most people define as falling in love at all.

But, nevertheless, he had been at once struck by the style of beauty possessed by Miss Eversfield, whom he had often seen and passingly admired in London, and as their eyes met during the dinner, he was perfectly aware that she would be the easiest of victims to his attentions. Not that he had at that moment the least idea

of attempting to win any more than an occasional smile from a fair one, fenced around with the formidable defence of such a father's *surveillance*.

It would, however, be a *piquante* amusement to elicit a few sparks from those brilliant eyes, and to cause the round soft cheek to glow with a still brighter carnation. Besides, it was agreeable to have anything so pleasant to gaze upon. The drive to the races had not dispelled this admiration. A nearer view of Car's beaming face only still more displayed its charms; and at the end of the long drive, Lord Glendinning still hovered near her, insisting upon taking upon himself the sole office of assisting her down from the phaeton, and then leading her to the stand, Lord Westover being obliged to transfer his attentions to some dowager of the party.

## CHAPTER II.

CAR was enjoying herself to her heart's content, oblivious of all except the moment's gratification. She had forgotten her father's parting words, her brother's illness; no thought of her sick mother threw a moment's gloom over those bright moments, and moreover, it had entirely escaped her memory that such a man as Norman Lawless had ever existed, and that she was to meet him that day in this very place, and, what was worse, to give her final answer to his proposal. And she would fain have continued to be oblivious, so absorbed was she in the exultation of the present moment.

What was the adulation she had been hitherto accustomed to receive, in comparison with those words which she now heard poured into her ears — and by such a man ? — mere child's play.

Those silly boys whose hearts she had so easily caught, whom ruthlessly she had the power to annihilate with a frown and vanquish with a smile, those abject slaves who, like pretty lap-dogs, would fawn at her feet, and humble themselves in the dust to obtain her slightest favour, her most indifferent smile !

No, it had been indeed all childish play before — but now how different ! That splendid yet formidable-looking man, gazing at her with eyes of unmistakable admiration, with such softness in his keen eyes, he, that great warrior, the cherished hero of the day, and such a *connoisseur* too in female beauty, as he was always considered,

—this was a triumph indeed ! And her heart beat proudly as her eyes sunk under his gaze, which even she, bold as was her nature, could scarcely encounter.

Suddenly her attention was aroused by the entrance of a party into the stand. Just then a sudden qualm came over her, for, towering over the heads of others, she perceived Norman Lawless. He was making his way towards the front of the stand, and on his arm there hung a young lady. The rest of the party were all known to her : it consisted of Lady Sutherland and her son Lord Sinclair, and several young ladies, whom Lady Sutherland was evidently chaperoning.

As soon as they were seated, Car saw that young Lawless's eyes were restlessly seeking some one, she well knew who, and speedily they rested upon herself, and her conspicuous companion.

At first a smile of pleasure flashed from his eyes, but soon a knitting of the eyebrows, and a sudden compression of the lips, indicated that a fierce pang had assailed his heart, as he noted Lord Glendinnon, and saw at once the devoted manner in which he was accosting his all but affianced wife—that man so well known as a very scourge to those who feared his rivalry—a man whose power over a woman's feelings seemed inevitable, if he only chose to excite it.

The young man sat gazing in petrified bewilderment for some time, his face becoming paler and paler, but suddenly he turned to his companion, and apparently devoted himself to her.

She was young and simply dressed, no wonderful beauty conspicuous in her face, her complexion so pale, only lighted up suddenly, now and then, by a slight suf-

fusion, giving animation to her eyes, which were strikingly fine. She smiled and looked up, with evident pleasure and confidence, into Norman Lawless's face, as he addressed her, and pointed out anything of interest which was going on, and Car at once could detect in his manner a degree of ease and familiarity which evidently evinced that she was not a recent acquaintance.

"I wonder who she can be," thought Car, as she noted all this, and like a true woman *of her sort*, though little she cared for poor young Lawless, a spirit partaking of jealousy springing instantaneously into her heart—"Who dared take her place with any one, until she had chosen to cast him off for ever?" And she even at this moment cogitated to herself—"I dare say it will end in my having to marry that man; so he had better beware."

"You are acquainted with those people  
VOL. II. C



who have just arrived, I think, Miss Eversfield?" asked Lord Glendinnon, with a significant expression in his tone: "at least one of them is well known to you, for I have often envied him his position—riding by your side in the park."

Car coloured up to her eyes, and then replied, "Oh, yes; he is one of Albert's friends. I am always infested by a tribe of young guardsmen."

"But Captain Lawless, I imagined, was the favoured one," persisted his lordship. "Who is that little girl by his side? I suppose his sister. She is rather *piquante* in her expression," he added, as he looked at her through his opera-glass; "something foreign in her style; not at all like a Lawless; certainly, at least, not the young ladies of the family I have seen."

"I know nothing about her," Car answered shortly; "and pray, Lord Glendin-

non, do not talk about my favouring Captain Lawless. I can tell you most truly that he is not at all in my style. I hate boys."

"How glad I am to hear you say so!" was the reply. "Then you have not been wearied by having me at your side for so long. I who, alas! am old enough to be the father of your young lovers." Then followed a few whispered words, which had the effect of dimpling the cheeks of the girl with smiles, and, although her eyes were downcast, she could feel with thrilling delight the expression with which she knew her noble admirer was regarding her.

And Lord Glendinnon enjoyed all this to his heart's core. It was one of the chief pastimes of his life, amusing himself in this way; attracting the feelings of every beautiful woman who had caught his own passing fancy, and to step in between every other

man who had before stood well in her estimation.

He began to admire Car Eversfield amazingly; but of course had no design upon her beyond the present moment. She was far beyond his reach; but it was pleasant, whilst it lasted, to make her thoroughly miserable and in love with him, and also extremely to his taste, to become the formidable rival of any presumptuous youth whose honourable attachment towards the present plaything of his fancy might be for ever blighted by the insidious poison of his attentions.

The heart of young Lawless was inflating with every degree of passion as the day passed on. He saw all that was going forward, yet seemed to ignore even the knowledge that his faithless fair one was present. His devotion was all lavished on his companion, whose young face was beaming with

undisguised delight, whilst she listened to the random talk of her neighbour, and received his attentions, little understanding the reason of the feverish excitement of his manner.

"Upon my word, little cousin," he exclaimed as he looked upon her, "you are grown very handsome! I should scarcely have known you again for the little dark mountain fairy of three years ago:" and the vivid blush this speech elicited was noted by Car Eversfield.

A great deal of laughing and talking ensued between them; and then she saw the party rise and disappear, in order to eat their luncheon; and finally she met them all nearly face to face as they walked on the course.

A bow and a look of recognition from Car sent the blood from the face of the young guardsman. There was something

in that look which said, "And pray why do you not speak to me?"

She had thought, "This will never do; I must not let the matter drop so lightly, as if, forsooth, I was of so little consequence. I shall take care not to give him a final answer; but I'll not stand his giving *me* up so easily."

Lord Glendinnon was not with her at that moment. Car was then walking with Lord Westover, and it did not the least surprise her to find Captain Lawless a moment after at her side.

Immediately, with a soft look, she placed her hand in his, which trembled with emotion, but he did not speak; and the only conversation which ensued was between Lord Westover and the young man. She heard, at last, an invitation given to him to come to Westover the following day, to stay till the end of the week, which was imme-

diately accepted. He would be at Westover to dinner; he was obliged to be in London that evening, and must therefore give up the morrow's race; but after that he should be at liberty.

"Now it is all over with me," she thought; "all my fun spoilt. However, thank goodness, I have one day more to enjoy the delight of that man's society, that more than glorious creature; but how shall I ever be able to turn to the vapid, uninteresting society of my future husband?"

And anyone who had watched the countenance of this girl whilst she thus meditated, might have traced an expression upon it militating greatly with the smiles which she a moment afterwards turned upon Norman Lawless, who lingered at her side, his before clouded countenance brightened, and his eyes seeking those of the

perfidious Car, with looks of the most intense love.

“And who is that beautiful girl?” asked the young lady, who was again seated by Captain Lawless’s side in the stand, “whom you stopped to talk with? I have been watching her the whole day. How devoted to her that fierce, handsome-looking man seems to be, and how she smiles and blushes at all he whispers in her ear! By-the-by, is she not that lovely creature I have seen you riding with in the Park?”

Lawless started as if he had received a sharp wound, but did not answer.

The young lady looked at him with surprise, as she saw how pale he turned, and noted the sinister look which darkened his expression.

“What is the matter?” she gently said.

“Matter! what do you think can be the matter, my little cousin?” he replied, turn-

ing towards her. "You asked me who that girl is; I will tell you;—she is a beautiful *fiend*, I believe."

The girl started, and Lawless laughed, and a bitter laugh it was.

"But never mind," he continued; "don't look at her. The horses are going to start; stand up and look at the race, and wish me well. I shall gain a good stake if the boy in yellow wins."

And Car, who had eyes and ears for everything, watched the movements of the pair; how, with strange familiarity, Lawless seemed to assist and hang over his neighbour; how his eyes dwelt upon her eager face whilst the horses were running; and how, in her anxiety, she grasped his arm with perfect familiarity; and when, finally, Yellow Jacket came in first, how she clapped her hands with joy, looking so pretty and youthful in the free abandonment



of her feelings, Car's heart swelled with envy, particularly when Lord Glendinnon's eyes, being attracted in that direction, fell upon the young girl who had made herself so conspicuous by her unrestrained demonstrations of pleasure, and he exclaimed, —

“That is a pretty child of nature ; graceful as only nature could make her. Who is she, I wonder ? Such freshness is seldom to be met with in the Brookwood race-stand.”

Lord Glendinnon did not at that moment look at the fair one by his side, or he would have been reminded that, to the tenacious ears of a vain beauty, praise of another is indeed gall and wormwood. Car could have murdered the pale little girl who was thus dividing the observation of her two admirers.

The return home proved a tedious concern. Lord Westover was obliged to drive back some gentleman guest who had relied

upon him for a seat in the phaeton, and Car was forced to return in the barouche with Lady Westover and some ladies. She watched Norman assist his companion of the stand on to the rumble of one of the carriages belonging to the party, and take his place by the delighted girl, all smiles of happiness. Car thought he also looked a great deal too contented in that position, as he passed as rapidly as four post horses could go, and touched his hat carelessly to her. Her inward ejaculation was, — “He shall pay for this; but in the meanwhile I should like to know who that horrid girl is. What creatures men admire! Even Lord Glendinnon stared at her through his opera-glass, and pronounced her *piquante*. And that old frump, Lord Sinclair, had his eye upon her all the time, like a *vieux grandpapa*, as he is. Well, there is no accounting for tastes. By-the-by, now I

think of it, I remember to have seen her in Lady Sunderland's opera-box, my former foggy of a lover, Lord Sinclair, by her side. She never struck me as worth even asking who she might be ; but it seems, in this case, that what's one man's meat is another man's poison."

These were the inward thoughts of the beautiful Car.

## CHAPTER III.

CAR was on the point of stepping into bed that night, when Lady Millicent, candle in hand, entered the room.

"What have you been about all this time, Milly?" she exclaimed, whilst she settled herself comfortably in her pretty little nest.

"About?" answered Lady Millicent, yawning, "why listening to a long lecture mamma has been giving, and which she desired me to repeat verbatim to you."

"Well, begin at once," Car replied, shutting her eyes, "and I shall be asleep before you come to the end of the first sentence;

that sort of thing has always the effect of a dose of laudanum upon me."

"But I can assure you, Car, it is no joke. Mamma is seriously displeased by the manner in which you are conducting yourself with Lord Glendinnon."

"*Going on*, is the proper way of describing my sins. I never *conduct* myself; that's too proper a term; *I go on*."

"Yes, you do go on, indeed," said her friend: "and mamma says, if Lord Glendinnon was not going away so soon, she could not bear the responsibility of having you under her charge, unless Sir Hector returned."

Car burst into a fit of laughter, and sprung up into her bed.

"What in the world does she think I am going to do?" she asked. "What sin in nature can it be to talk to a man old enough to be my father?"

"Mamma says she has invited Captain Lawless on your account, knowing how much he is in love with you; and she feels *quite certain* that the affair will be entirely at an end if you *go on*, as you call it, in such a manner with that profligate man."

"Now, Milly, that's all jealousy. You grudge the dear man's little attentions to me. If *you* had been the favoured fair —"

"I lay no claim to Lord Glendinnon's attentions," indignantly replied the young lady. "I am neither a beauty, nor am I a flirt; and, moreover, I am engaged to marry another man. However, I must just tell you one thing, Car. It is all very well amusing yourself as you have done; you have had your fun, and so have I, though not quite in your way; but there is a time for everything, and if you don't take care you'll be left in the lurch some day. Men will find what a two-edged tool you are,

and you will be left alone as one too dangerous to play with. And, to cut the matter short, for I am tired and sleepy, mamma bid me tell you that if you do not behave yourself (of course she expressed herself more courteously), she really will write to Lady Julia. So good night, Car, and pray be a good girl."

And Car was left to darkness and meditation. From the latter she was soon relieved, for scarcely had she once more laid her head upon her pillow, petulantly exclaiming, — "What bores they all are!" when sleep overtook her, and she was wrapt in its overpowering shades, until awakened by her maid the following morning.

"Oh, what a dull day this will be!" she yawned. "None of the ladies are to go to the races; only the gentlemen. No use getting up, I think. And, by-the-by, I am in dis-

grace ; I suppose Lady Westover will give me a lecture in person. Millicent is growing mighty disagreeable since her engagement to that prig of a lord ; she used to be as up to fun as anyone, once. That's just one of the evils of matrimony ; a girl so often changes into a dull ditty of a piece of propriety, particularly if she has been a good out-and-outer of the fast sort before. And sometimes, strange to say, it is quite the contrary ; the quietest girls become after marriage stunning wild ones. Well, for my part, I do not think anything will ever change me ; no, not a million of husbands. But really it is a bore !—people will never let me enjoy myself ; and that tiresome Lawless coming this evening !” Certainly the girl looked a perfect picture of freshness and youth, as she sat all dishevelled, just as she had quitted her bed, leaning her chin upon her hand, cogitating ;



one moment pouting her red lips, and impatiently stamping her white naked foot; the next, smiling triumphantly, whilst her eyes sparkled as thoughts of the past evening crowded through her mind.

"Yes," she at last said, "it is very fine preaching to me; it is of no use. I always said I was a doomed one, and I cannot like anything that is considered *good* for me. Mine, I suppose, is a vitiated taste, for I think Lord Glendinnon quite perfection. Oh! to be his slave, would that not be bliss? Does not the idea make me shrink from the trammels of being one man's wife?—and I, who care not one fig for that boy Lawless. But they want to get rid of me, and I suppose that must be my fate; and *he*, that prince of men, will be gone to-morrow."

It was late before Car Eversfield made her appearance at the breakfast-table. She

slipped into the chair by Lord Westover's side, without being perceived by those who sat at the other side of the long table.

Lord Glendinnon, she saw, was seated by Lady Westover, and her ladyship seemed to be engrossing his attention by what she was saying, which, by the shakes of her head, portentous nods, and reproachful smiles, Car knew must be of some importance. If her ears had been long enough, she might have heard her say,

"By-the-by, Lord Glendinnon, I really am going to scold you."

"My dear Lady, what have I done?"

"You are turning the head of Car Eversfield, who is already the most difficult girl to manage. I believe she has almost driven poor Lady Julia distracted."

"Lady Westover, what have I done? Do you think that a beautiful girl like that would care to be noticed by such an old

fellow as I am? I talk to her as I would to my daughter."

"You know very well, Lord Glendinnon, that you are talking nonsense," Lady Westover answered, laughing. "However, I must ask you to suspend your fatherly notice, for we expect Captain Lawless to-day, who is head and ears over in love with her, and, I believe, half engaged to marry her. For mercy's sake, let the affair come off, which it certainly will not, if you become the young man's rival. Car is the most slippery creature that ever existed, leading men on to the very last moment, and then, without the slightest compunction, throwing them over. Now in Lord Sinclair's case, that would have been such a marriage for her! But no; after turning even his wise head completely, nothing would induce her to accept him. It almost broke her mother's heart."

Lord Glendinnon laughed, and endeavoured completely to ignore what she meant by her attack upon him; but, happening to turn his head, he encountered a pair of eyes fixed so intently upon him that, *blasé* as he was, he felt the colour rise in his cheeks, and the thought struck him that he had certainly better "take care what he was about." Lord Glendinnon knew perfectly the inmost character of this girl. He read it most legibly in her face, her words, her actions; for, with all her sins, Car was no hypocrite. The feeling of the moment was ever conspicuous in her countenance, and soon gave utterance in words.

He was well aware what an impulsive creature she was, and he saw how attractively handsome she also was. He admired her greatly. To his vitiated taste she was just what pleased him most; so young, and

yet evidently so thoroughly captivated by himself; just the thing to enhance her perfections; for what man of forty-five is not flattered by the evident preference of a very young girl? But he reflected, "I must, indeed, take care; it will not be safe ground."

And soon he saw her open a letter the servant had just delivered.

"Ernest is better," she exclaimed joyfully; then added, in a less excited tone, "and papa will be here to dinner."

And Car looked very grave; she was thinking that she must, indeed, mind what she was about, and she wished "dear papa" would have stayed one day more at Portsmouth. And Lord Glendinnon thought so too; but his reflections were something in this strain, as he sauntered out of the breakfast-room without approaching Car Eversfield. "It is just as well, no doubt;

I should have played the fool, and done still more mischief. I see that ignitable little girl is rather dangerous to play with, for unfortunately *she has a father!*"

However, before his lordship departed for the races, he could not resist doing a little more mischief. Espying a group of young ladies sauntering in the flower garden, adjacent to the house, he joined them.

"I came," he said in a low voice to Car, "to beg for something sweet to put in my button-hole. I should like one of those," and he pointed to some beautiful blossoms which she had placed in her bosom. Car immediately presented them, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes.

"But you must arrange them for me. I, poor powerless man, with but this one hand to help myself!"

The girl instantly obeyed. They were apart from the rest; the others were busily engaged in looking at the birds in an aviary close by. Her fingers trembled as she adjusted the flowers. Never had this wild girl felt as now. She was conquered at last; and as her head stooped low, whilst fastening the flowers in the button-hole, bringing her in such close contact with a heart whose very beatings she could feel, it was with a thrill of joy, rather than indignation, that she felt an arm round her waist, pressing her to that heart, and a kiss imprinted on her bended head. Oh, poor misguided girl! and she felt flattered, delighted, little heeding the impropriety of the act, its disrespectful impertinence, the liberty presumed to be taken with her father's daughter. She shrank not from these caresses, although she dared not raise

her eyes to meet those which she knew were bending over her so admiringly.

And with such feelings agitating every pulse of her heart, Car Eversfield awaited the arrival of the man she had made up her mind to marry.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a tedious day at Westover, particularly to Car Eversfield. Every gentleman had gone to the races.

"Oh! Milly," she said to her friend, as they sauntered in the grounds after luncheon, "what a deadly lively place the country is! Defend me from having much to do with it. I should die of the blue devils in no time."

"What will you do when you have to domicile at that grim old place in the highlands, Captain Lawless's future home, or in the old wild castle in Ireland?" was the reply.



"What shall I do? Why, cut my throat. But, Milly, any place will be as bad with him. Oh, good gracious!" and she clasped her hands, "what am I to do, Milly? I am so miserable. I know that I have what is called, compromised myself; that I have almost promised to marry that odious boy; and I hate and detest him."

Lady Millicent looked surprised.

"Car," she said, "this is very horrid. What is to be done?"

"There is only one thing to be done; I must marry him. I know they all want to get rid of me, and that will be better than going home—to that country home. They talk of giving up the house in London, and living always at that detestable place; I to be shut up in that prison, with its green walls of thick trees—I who only live when I feel myself in dear London; who never care about seeing any

tree but the dusty leaves in the Park and Kensington Gardens; who care for no sounds but of the carriages rattling over the stones of that delicious town. What matters to me the song of birds? — horrid little things! I should soon pine and die. Schools and cottages — the very idea makes me sick. I am a regular London girl, Milly; and it will be better to be tied even to that stupid fellow Lawless, and drag on my chains there, than pine and break my heart in the country; everybody looking shocked whenever I open my mouth; no one asked to enter our doors but old frumps. No. I will marry him — there is no alternative; — but oh, what a bore it will be!”

Her friend laughed; but notwithstanding her former fastness, Lady Millicent was, in comparison to Car, certainly not a vicious girl, though her worldly breeding had de-

teriorated a mind otherwise not inclined to be bad.

She had, however, fortunately been destined to obtain a husband of a superior stamp to those with whom she had so freely associated heretofore. Lord Nursland was a sensible, excellent young man; and Lady Millicent soon found that, if she married him, she must remodel all her ideas and ways before she could be a fit wife for him; indeed, he had gently insinuated to her that he did not approve of that bold girl, Car Eversfield; and hoped that, when he returned from his mission to St. Petersburg, he should find that she had, in a measure, dropped her acquaintance.

And this led to a slight quarrel between the lovers; Millicent standing up for Car, and declaring that nothing would induce her to give up her old friend. However, the eyes of the young lady were now opened

to much that had before passed uncensured. She saw Car certainly under quite a new aspect, and shrank almost with something like disgust at her sayings and doings; and when she heard this declaration from her lips, of her determination to marry a man whom she said "she hated and detested," she really thought it very dreadful, and soon, although at first she laughed, became grave and silent.

"What is the matter, Milly?" Car at length exclaimed. "Why, you look as grave as any of those stupid people who think every word I speak atrocious; how changed you are!"

"I am, I suppose, changed; for what you say sounds to me very terrible; and I really think, although it may make a fuss, you had better at once give up young Lawless —"

The words had scarcely passed her lips, when the person just named suddenly appeared before them, issuing from a side walk they were just passing.

## CHAPTER IV.

BOTH the girls started and coloured violently; Lady Millicent fearing Lawless must have heard his name just uttered by her. She turned her eyes anxiously upon Car, wondering what her greeting would be to the young man; and, to her surprise, it was quite the reverse of cold disdain or dislike.

With her cheeks glowing, and her eyes still brilliant, from the startling feelings this sudden appearance of the man on whom she had been pouring invectives had occasioned, she turned towards Captain Lawless, and no one could have imagined,

from the manner in which this first-rate coquette accosted him, that she "hated and detested him." No! —for her thoughts probably were: Ought is better than Nought.!

Anything in the semblance of a man was, for the time being, acceptable in her eyes, upon whom she could exercise her wiles, and from whom she might receive the incense of admiration.

The young man, at first nervously agitated, was soon calming down into delighted hope, as he perceived the soothing demeanour of the girl whom he really loved with all the ardour of an impassioned nature.

Oh, that wily Car! who, to have seen her at that moment, could have imagined what was passing in her deceitful heart?

Not even her friend could fathom the real state of her feelings. She thought, "After all, perhaps all this time Car,

really cares for Captain Lawless, and what she has been saying is merely her ordinary truthless *façon de parler*. She cannot be so bad as she really makes herself out to be. How she now encourages that poor young man by those alluring glances! Well, I shall contrive to escape and leave them together, and perhaps the affair may be settled in a satisfactory manner. Oh, how I wish Lord Glendinnon had never been here! All then would have gone right."

And Lady Millicent did contrive to make her escape, and the pair were left alone in an umbrageous part of the wood, some distance from the house. They were silent a few minutes, and then Car abruptly exclaimed,

"Pray, who was that girl to whom you were so devoted yesterday? It was *faute de mieux*, I suppose, that you were so outrageously civil to her."



"Oh, not at all," was the reply. "Don't you think she is a very attractive looking girl? I consider her a charming little creature."

Car turned very red, and tossed her head with a contemptuous gesture.

"Don't you admire her?" Lawless again asked.

"Admire her? not I; a white-faced fright; but I suppose you do," and she looked defiantly at the young man, whose spirits were rising at the present aspect of affairs. She did then care for him, for evidently she was jealous.

"But do you care whether I admire her, or not?" he asked, in a soft tone of tenderness.

"I—why should I?" was the pettish answer. "I can only deplore your bad taste. But again I ask you, who is she? what is her name? I desire you will tell me!" and she stamped her foot.

"What's in a name?" Lawless commenced, laughing; "the rose,"——but he was cut short in his quotation by his imperious lady-love.

"Oh hold your tongue!" she cried, "I don't want to hear that old worn-out quotation, I only want to know who that girl is; if you won't tell me I shall leave you this moment."

"Well, then, if you will have it, she is my cousin."

"Oh! Your cousin, is she?" and she surveyed him from head to foot. "No great family likeness," she added; "her colouring is slightly different;" and she looked superciliously at the certainly rather sandy hair of the young Captain.

"No," he added, "I cannot boast such attractions as my little cousin — such eyes, such teeth! In a year or two we shall see how handsome she will be."

“Oh!” was the ejaculation which issued from the lips of Car; but there was as much significance in the monosyllable as if much had been spoken; and then, turning round, she added, “I am going to the house.” But that was soon prevented, her hand tightly grasped in that of Captain Lawless, and then came words and protestations; such a torrent of love poured from his lips, that even Car’s hard heart was for the moment touched.

He led her to a seat, and then, in a manly, honest manner, laid at her feet every hope of future happiness,—in short, asked her (and his manner calmed down into almost a tone of solemnity) what her final decision was to be.

“I can brook no farther uncertainty,” he added, fiercely. “Tell me, at once, whether you can love me sufficiently to be my wife;

but if your feelings are repugnant to our union, say so now, and I must try to make up my mind to a fate of wretchedness, disappointment—nay, despair.” “Yes, Car,” he continued with almost frantic vehemence, “it is easy for you to smile and look incredulous; you, who, though I love you to distraction, I know full well are false and cold-hearted. You can never feel as I do! No; your decision and future conduct as my wife will be the turning point in my character. If you marry me, and love me, all may be well; all that is bad in me—and I tell you truly there is much of bad in my nature—may soften down and improve;—but,”—and the expression of the young man’s face became so alarming that even Car’s courage began to wax feeble, so livid a hue overspread his face, such a vindictive gleam glowed from his eyes.

“If you throw me off, after already hav-

ing drawn me on to suppose you would become my wife, I am a ruined man, and not only will you have my moral destruction to answer for, but, you may depend upon it, Car, you will also fall with me. Now, at once and finally, speak out,—is it to be, or is it not ?”

“What a fuss you are making about nothing at all,” exclaimed the girl, trying to shake off the momentary feeling of discomfiture and fear her lover’s violence had inspired. “What occasion is there for all this absurd and abusive tirade? Why cannot you ask me quietly, and in a gentlemanly manner, the question? I don’t like to be bullied in this way.”

“Bullied !” was the reply, “ask your own conscience whether I have not every right to be thus vehement,—that is to say, if you possess such a thing as a conscience. I am not a man to be defied, to be trampled under

foot with impunity, to sit patiently and see my affianced wife allow the libertine devotion of a man like Lord Glendinnon, a man who does not possess one atom of principle where a woman is concerned. Car, if you *are* to marry me, you must solemnly promise to have no more communication with him, neither by word nor act."

Car's heart sank within her. What was she to do? Strange to say, the lover by her side had lost nothing in her estimation by his present decided though stern proceeding. A woman in her heart always appreciates firmness in a man, whether for good or bad. Anything approaching to weakness sinks him at once in her opinion. Make a man a slave, and when once that is done, the next thing which follows is that he is despised.

Car never felt so disposed to favour her young lover as at this moment, when his

words, his looks, his actions, all betrayed the strong feelings of his heart, even though they were hurled in invectives against herself.

Lawless had risen from the seat, and was now pacing backwards and forwards before her in uncontrollable agitation.

“Well!” he at length exclaimed, “what do you intend to say? Will you agree to my proposal and the conditions?”

“Oh, Norman!” she answered, meekly for her, for she actually felt nervous, “you really frighten me!”

“You need not be frightened, Car,” he said more gently; “but I must have a decisive answer, now or never. Will you marry me, and will you promise never again to speak to Lord Glendinnon?—of course I mean never but in the most distant manner. Now, don’t argue the point, but say at once, yes or no.”

"I will, I will," she said hurriedly.

"Swear that you will do both: marry me, and drop the acquaintance of that libertine."

Car paused before she again spoke; but such a look was emitted from the eyes, which never moved from her face, that with a faltering voice she said,

"I swear. You are very cruel to treat me in this way."

"Cruel, my darling! my beautiful love!" now cried the young man; "cruel, only to be the more kind."

And then such a storm of protestations and caresses followed, as he pressed his *fiancée* in his arms, that even Car was overwhelmed and overcome, and really began, wonderingly to herself, to feel that her cold heart was beginning to warm towards her ardent young lover.

"You will go at once and tell your



father and Lady Westover how happy you have made me, my sweetest?" Lawless asked as they sauntered towards the house, being warned by the half hour bell that they must no longer linger in the wood.

"Oh no, Norman! Please let our engagement be a secret while we are in this house full of people."

"No, Car; I will not consent to this," he exclaimed vehemently, his eyes again emitting sparks of anger, and his face again becoming severe and livid. "I insist upon the business being made public to-day. It must and shall be so. I have my reasons for what I say. Are you ashamed of your engagement, pray? If so, I will set you free," and petulantly he dropped her arm.

This was indeed an off-hand manner of doing business, quite new to the spoiled Car. She felt it was all over with her, that she *must* succumb to her imperious lover;

and again, to her own surprise, she thought that although it was "all over with her," yet perhaps it was all right, and the only way to compete with her: so, with a meek obedience, wholly unnatural to her, she promised to tell Lady Westover, though she added,

"It will be very disagreeable to be the mark for all the eyes of the gossips assembled here."

"Never mind ; it will be all for the best, I am sure."

So the young man thought. We never know what is for the best, short-sighted mortals as we are. Had the secret been kept that night, perhaps much of mischief might have been spared.

## CHAPTER V.

CAR flew at once into Lady Westover's dressing-room, and without heeding who was there to hear her confessions, began at once with "Oh, Lady Westover, he has proposed, and I have accepted him!"

And she stood before the lady breathless and agitated in a most unusual way.

"I am delighted to hear it, my dear," the lady answered, advancing and affectionately kissing her. "Lady Julia and Sir Hector will, I am sure, be much pleased."

"Yes; at the prospect of getting rid of me," Car passionately exclaimed, at the same time beginning to cry. "Yes; and that

is the only reason I accepted him. All my fun will be over, I plainly see. The man has a temper, Lady Westover, and he has just given me a specimen of it, and I know he will act the bashaw when he has me once in his clutches."

"Oh no, if you are a good little wife, I daresay he will make a great pet of you; but, Car, you really must——"

"A good little wife!" passionately interrupted the girl, "what a character to descend into. Why, Lady Westover, you are talking to me as if I were a housemaid going to marry one of your under-gardeners. I shall never make a good little wife; the very notion makes me quite sick."

Lady Westover laughed.

"Well," she said, "at any rate, pray don't make a bad little wife."

Car groaned, and added — "I suppose I shall not dare to do that; but, Lady West-

over, pray don't tell the people here ; not even Lord Westover."

"But Lord Westover has already heard it," said his Lordship, rising from the sofa, on which he had been reclining unseen by Car, listening with much amusement to the conversation. "Yes, I have been unwittingly an eaves-dropper, and am penetrated with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. I have heard that I am to lose my beautiful young friend ; for now, indeed, I shall be cast for ever into the shade."

"No, indeed, Lord Westover, you will not. I like you much better than *him*. Oh, how I wish that tiresome man had not come here ! I should, at least, have had a little more breathing time to amuse myself."

Lady Westover's maid entered the room.

"If you please, Miss Eversfield, Sir

Hector has arrived, and is asking for you."

"Oh, good gracious! and now I must tell him. Was there ever such an unlucky girl born?" she exclaimed, as with a very woe-begone face, not at all like that of a blushing, conscious, but happy *fiancée*, she joined her father, and, scarcely listening to his account of her sick brother, interrupted him by saying —

"But, papa, I have such a thing to tell you!"

The general was quite alarmed when he looked at her changed expression of countenance.

"What is it, child?" he asked, quickly.

"Oh, it is something which will please you and mamma! You will soon get rid of your troublesome Car, — I have accepted Captain Lawless."

"We shall be glad if your happiness is

ensured by it, my child. But, Car, what is all this about?" he added, anxiously, as the girl laid her head upon his shoulder, and wept such tears as he had never before seen her shed, for they were not those of wayward petulance, but more as if they were really wrung from genuine feeling. "My darling child, what is it? Do you feel repugnant to the marriage?"

"Yes — no —" she sobbed.

"Then why do you weep?"

"I scarcely know; but, papa, say no more. I have made up my mind, and I wish nothing to be said to unsettle my purpose. I believe, after all, Norman Lawless is the best man I could have found to marry me." And so saying, after kissing her father over and over again most affectionately, she hurried away, knowing that she had only a few moments left in which to make her toilette.

"Oh, if Lord Glendinnon had not been here, all would have gone on well!" She sighed as she hurriedly allowed her maid to smooth her hair; she cared not how she looked or what she wore.

"It is all one with me," she thought; "*he* must not look at me now; and as for the other, — what does it signify?"

And she went down just when dinner was being announced, with red eyes and pale face, and in a sober manner, very unlike herself, accepted the arm of her expecting lover, and took her usual place by Lord Westover's side.

Lord Glendinnon stealthily looked across the table, and gave one glance at Car Eversfield.

"Oh," he thought, "it is as I expected! She has accepted him, and is wretched. Poor little fool, she heartily detests the idea. Yes, she is far too charming to



be thrown away upon that youngster, who, if report says truly, is none of the best, — a hot-headed and yet obstinate fellow; he'll clip her wings, pretty bird, and try to tame her, — no easy attempt, I should say.—The young tiger, to come in the way of my amusement at this moment! I never felt more inclined to fall in love than with this girl; and I had arranged to stay here a few days longer, in order to make a fool of myself."

His Lordship really felt no slight disappointment and disgust, accompanied by intense hatred, towards his young rival.

The fact is, that from his window, whilst dressing, Lord Glendinnon had seen the engaged pair advancing towards the house. He saw Car impatiently extricating herself from the arm which had presumptuously encircled her waist, evidently fearful of being observed; he noted also the trium-

phant expression of the young man's face, the discomfiture of the girl's. He guessed at once how matters stood between them, and a diabolical expression overspread his countenance.

He, the great General, Lord Glendinnon, to be set aside by a young subaltern, a beardless boy!—this man of pleasure, who had seldom met with a check in his career, whatever it might be, to be thus foiled of his present pastime!

He chafed in spirit. Execrations were poured forth upon the presumptuous Lawless; schemes of revenge concocted. A word from him, he felt, could overthrow much of his exulting happiness. And why all this rancour? What had he expected Car Eversfield ever would be to him? The mere toy of the moment, to be played with till tired of and then cast away!

“But I have not done with her yet,” he

muttered between his clenched teeth, as he withdrew his eyes from a sight which, like Satan when he first looked upon the pair in Paradise, filled his heart with diabolical envy.

Car's eyes were downcast, her head averted; but young Lawless cared little who saw the exultation of *his* expression,—the proud, happy countenance which seemed to say —

“ Yes, I have conquered ; she is mine.”

“ Short shall be your triumph, you abject boy,” was Lord Glendinnon's thought as he sat and listened to Lady Westover's half-whispered comment,—

“ I am so glad it is really to be ; such a relief it will prove to poor Lady Julia, who has been almost worried to death by that girl's escapades. And it will be such a match for her ; his mother, you know, was an heiress, and immensely rich —— ”

"The father a penniless *roué* of an Irish Peer," added Lord Glendinnon, sneeringly.

"Yes, but that does not much signify; Lady Curraghmore qualifies it all by her respectable Scotch blood and never-ending Scotch acres."

"Oh, I know her; a regular Gorgon of a woman, with the temper of a Billingsgate *habituée*. By-the-bye, I have heard her son inherits that quality, though fortunately not her Ladyship's red hair."

"Oh, be merciful, my dear Lord. Perhaps it is as well that Car should stand in awe of her husband; she must not have it always her own way. But what have you heard about Captain Lawless's temper?"

"Only that it is an infernal one,—I beg your Ladyship's pardon; that, once offended, he is implacable, and that he is obstinate as the devil himself. I have heard of him

from a nephew of mine, who is in the same battalion of the Guards."

Lady Westover's attention was called away, and again Lord Glendinnon glanced towards Car, who also had her eyes fixed in his direction. She had been watching Lady Westover, well knowing what had been the theme of her conversation. Captain Lawless was bending over his plate for the moment, leaving his fair neighbour at liberty to look elsewhere, upon others besides himself.

Their eyes met.

What was it that instantaneously paled the cheek of the girl to that extent that her father, who was opposite, happening to look at her, exclaimed, "Car, are you not well?"

Then, quick as lightning, the blood flowed into the white face, crimsoning it with the ruddiest glow.

But, poor girl, unhappy as she had before felt, now she was wretched. She felt that she hated the man she was obliged to marry, and that another had stolen from her any portion of a heart she might ever have possessed. At all events, he alone pleased her fancy—we will not call it love.

A changed creature the girl appeared when she left the dining-room, and, rushing upstairs, threw herself upon her bed, and cried heartily.

“Oh! Milly, Milly, what am I to do?” she sobbed forth, when her friend soon came to her. “I am the most miserable of girls. I know I cannot get off; indeed, I dare not. But, oh, what can I do? You know I cannot like him.”

“I know one thing,” said Lady Millicent, “it is all that pernicious Lord Glendinning; I saw him looking at you at dinner; he is a horrid, wicked wretch.”

"I daresay he is, Milly; but still he has captivated me, and never can I get over it. No, I feel that I cannot. And I suppose it is wrong to marry another man, feeling as I do?"

"Yes, very wrong; therefore you must get over it, Car. What good will it do to you cherishing such a bad feeling? The man is married, and a wretch into the bargain. It was very wrong of Papa ever to ask him here."

"Don't talk of that glorious creature in such a manner. Oh! Milly, Milly, I adore him."

"I am disgusted to hear you speak thus; but I rejoice to say you will soon be out of his reach. Sir Hector says he goes home to-morrow, early, and I shall be heartily rejoiced to see you safe off."

"To-morrow are we to go?" cried Car, starting up. "Oh, then it will indeed be

all over with me!" and redoubled sobbing and crying ensued.

"I advise you to remain quietly in your room to-night, Car; there is no occasion for you to appear; the people here all know already, I suppose from instinct, how matters stand, and will easily imagine that you are overcome, and so forth,—so pray encounter no more of the basilisk glances which affect you so perniciously. Now I must go for half an hour. Mamma will expect me to talk to these people, but I shall soon return; in the meanwhile lie still, Car, and compose yourself. I will make your absence all right with Captain Lawless."

"Make it all right with Captain Lawless!—what care I for that?" Car exclaimed, starting up again, as soon as the door had closed upon her friend. "I wish she would make it all wrong! Oh! what a miserable girl I am; pledged irrevocably



to one man, and desperately in love with another! And Milly to tell me so coolly that I had better never see him again — horrid, too horrid! I can't lie here all the long evening; I should be stark, staring mad in less than an hour. No, I must see him once again, though I suppose I must not speak to him, for fear of that hot-headed Norman, who I plainly see can be a very demon. However, I shall be in the same room with him, and that will be something. Yes, I will go down." And she approached the looking-glass.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, absolutely starting at her own appearance, "what a wretch I look! I scarcely know myself; but what does it now signify?" So, after bathing her eyes and smoothing her hair, to Lady Westover's surprise she saw Car glide into the saloon.

## CHAPTER V.

CAR paused before entering the apartment; it opened upon a suite of reception-rooms, all lighted up, but at that moment empty, the whole party having just then congregated in the large saloon. She saw in a moment that the gentlemen were there, and her quick eyes rapidly fixed themselves on the individuals connected with her present thoughts and interests.

She perceived Captain Lawless, with a perturbed face, talking anxiously to Lady Millicent, and then her eyes fell upon her father in conversation with Lord Glendinnon; they were standing a little apart

from the others, and seemed to be gravely, though amicably, discussing some knotty point. No doubt musty politics, thought Car.

She stood for a minute contemplating the pair, and then a thought struck her. "I will go to Papa, and then *he* must speak to me; and oh! how fortunate—Milly and that tiresome Norinan have just turned into the conservatory; he, I suppose, wants to ask her advice as to the proper method of managing me."

The next moment and she was by her father's side, her hand in his. Car really had always had one soft corner in her heart, which had been filled with love for her father, and the expression of her countenance always improved whilst under the influence of his kind eye.

"My darling," he said, "I heard that you were not feeling very well, and I was

just coming to seek you; but you look very blooming now," he added, as he noted the crimson flush spreading over her face and neck. "She does not give one the idea of an ailing invalid — does she, Glendinning?"

"No, truly," was the answer, whilst his eyes now again rested unrestrainedly upon her.

Sir Hector little imagined that it was with the poisonous gaze of that tempter, which had before driven all the lilies from her face.

Sir Hector was summoned to the whist table. "Lady Millicent is gone into the conservatory," he said; "you had better join her there, Car. She has one with her whom the sight of you will not a little cheer. Such a woe-begone countenance as his, when he heard you were not to appear, I have seldom seen. Let me take you to them."

"Sir Hector, the whist table is waiting impatiently for you. Let me have the honour of leading Miss Eversfield to her thrice happy lover."

He offered his arm, and they walked towards the conservatory. What could the father do? It would have appeared uncourteous to have refused this commonplace piece of civility.

"My dear Car, where are you going?" said Lady Westover anxiously, as they passed her.

"Sir Hector gave Miss Eversfield into my charge, to put her safely into other hands," was the reply, and they went on.

The night was beautiful, balmy and warm; the moon shining bright and tempting for a stroll. On entering the conservatory, they found it deserted. Most of the guests were on the terrace — some at cards, others in the music-room.

"Oh, Miss Eversfield, how glad I am to be able to say a few words to you alone! Am I then to congratulate you?"

"How can you ask such a question? You know I am miserable." And tears began to flow down her cheeks, which were again so pale.

Much was murmured in her ear; we will not write it here. They talked, or rather he whispered in her ear, for she was speechless.

"Essaying by his devilish arts to reach  
The organs of her fancy."

"I must go," she suddenly exclaimed; "if they find me alone with you they will all be so angry;" and she sighed heavily.

"Am I never thus to see you again?" he asked, "for when we again meet, what will it matter then to me? You will be another's." Car answered not; her heart sunk between fear of Lawless's entrance,

and unhappiness at the idea just presented to her mind.

"Once more let me be happy in your presence, beautiful creature," Lord Glendinnon continued, grasping tightly her trembling hand. "This night — nay, start not, what can be the harm? — let us have a stroll by the river's side, when all are at rest. By the little side door, which is easily opened, you can issue forth, and then, lovely one, for the *last time* we may meet in peace."

"I cannot — no, I cannot," she faltered, struggling to free herself from his grasp. "And how should I know when to join you? The men in this house sit up so late, and are always strolling about these hot nights, with their cigars. No, it cannot be."

"But it must," was the determined answer; "watch from your window, and I

will be underneath it, when I know that the coast is clear. Say yes, or here will I detain you till your intended arrives, and then ——”

“Oh, let me go, I beseech you,” said Car, really alarmed, and anxious to escape, hearing footsteps approach.

“Never, till you say yes.”

“Then, yes ; but oh, how wrong it will be !”

And, feeling her hand free, she rushed from the conservatory, and reached Lady Westover’s side. Her Ladyship at first did not perceive her ; but when she did, she was quite alarmed at the appearance of the girl, so pale and ill she looked.

“I feel faint, Lady Westover, but it will soon pass,” she gasped ; “don’t notice it.”

And there Lawless and Lady Millicent found her, and then she tried to rally, and to talk and laugh ; and thus, suffering



tortures of mind, the evening passed, and the wretched girl at length found herself alone in her room. Fenton was soon despatched, and also Lady Millicent, who had come from Lady Westover, to find out if there was really anything the matter with Car, and armed with a draught to compose her nerves, which was eagerly swallowed by the patient; and then Lady Millicent was requested to leave her to repose.

"Of course I feel regularly done," she said; "such a day of worry it has been. Oh! Milly, Milly, there is not a more unhappy wretch in the world than I am."

"My dear Car, I am really very sorry to hear you say so. Do you dislike so very much the idea of your engagement? If so, for mercy's sake, before it is irrevocable, speak out. When I thought it was only from absolute folly that you rejected so

excellent an offer, I urged you to accept it; but now, God forbid that I should take upon myself so fearful a responsibility as to urge your doing such violence to your feelings."

"I do not wish to retract from my engagement," Car answered, despondingly; "I suppose I must be married some of these days, and it matters little to whom I shall be tied for life. It is not that which makes me feel so miserable; I have made up my mind to that misfortune. But good night, Milly; I had better go to bed."

"Well, I will go," her friend replied; "but let me entreat you, Car, to weigh this matter well in your mind, and remember you will be committing a deadly sin if you think of marrying Captain Lawless without a proper feeling towards him."

"A *deadly sin* will it be?" Car exclaimed

when the door closed, and she was alone. "Oh, what a wretched, wicked girl I am!" she continued, wringing her hands, "and I am about to commit a deadly sin—at least, so people would call it; not that I do—for what harm can there be in taking a quiet walk with a man old enough to be my father? My father, indeed!—a very different man to him, although I verily believe dear Papa is very little older than Lord Glendinning. Heigho! would that I had never seen that superb creature! But it will be soon over; this shall be my last exploit of *fast fun*. How bright the moon shines!" she added; "far too bright for what I am going to do—a deed of darkness I suppose it really ought to be called." And she proceeded to equip herself in a large shawl, and tied a lace veil of the same material over her head. "However, I suppose I shall be like Milly when fairly in

for it, and become a starch piece of propriety as she is becoming."

The night was so sultry that Car sat by the open window, leaning her head upon her hand. She watched the glorious moon as it sailed majestically in the heavens. She felt the delicious air, perfumed by the odour of flowers, wafting upon her cheek, and for a brief moment in that poor girl's existence, softened feelings exercised their influence upon her mind.

"How beautiful and calm is all around!" she thought; "I could almost turn sentimental, and even try to quote some of the bothering poetry those tiresome governesses, after much hard work, have drummed into my dull brains:—

" ' Oh Good, oh Great beyond compare,  
If thus Thy meaner works are fair ;  
If thus Thy glories gild the span  
Of ruined earth, and sinful man,—

How glorious must those mansions be  
Where Thy redeemed shall dwell with Thee !'

Ah, yes ; those mansions — that other world. What a dreadful idea that is to me, that world into which nothing, they say, but the pure in heart can enter. Not that I think much about it,—what's the use ? Oh, yes, what's the use, to such a hopeless, reckless girl as I am ?”

And for a moment she clasped her hands in despairing energy, whilst her eyes still fixed themselves on the bright and then unclouded luminary which shone so brilliantly upon her.

Whilst she continued to gaze, a small black cloud made itself visible on the hitherto spotless horizon, slowly advancing towards the large, calm, chaste-looking moon, Car watching its movements with avidity—her heart beating fast, as she saw it sailing nearer and nearer, threatening so

soon to cover the light with its dark shadow.

In another moment the moon would be overcast; but just then her eyes had fallen on another object — the form of a tall man advancing—and then all around was darkness. The black cloud had hidden all the light of the moon.

## CHAPTER VI.

THEY were soon strolling by the river's side, that lovely spot which art had assisted nature in rendering most alluring as a retreat to the inhabitants of the Castle. Smooth walks, flower-beds, grottoes, and garden-seats interspersed in picturesque arrangement. Lord Westover's luxurious taste was conspicuously displayed in the arrangement of this his pet spot, of all the beautiful grounds with which he was surrounded.

And here was Car Eversfield, the daughter of a father whose honest heart could never have imagined it possible that any child of

his could thus have forfeited her self-respect, hanging on the arm of a man whose insidious words were dropping like poison in her ear, confessing without reserve that she loved him; — yes, him, the husband of another, and she the affianced bride of a man whom, in cold blood, she intended to marry and to deceive.

This is too horrid to think even possible; but, alas! alas! so it is, we fear too often, in this our world lying in wickedness.

Poor, miserable girl! she had forgotten all save the sensations of the moment; and there she now sat, drinking in his words, which echoed a response in her heart. All around was light as day; for the moon, as if impatient of her temporary extinction, soon sailed from beneath the black cloud, and lent her aid in rendering conspicuous the persons of the girl and man who thus acted this perfidious part.



"Oh, Lord Glendinnon, why do you speak thus? — you know I hate him," protested Car.

"Then why distract me, beautiful creature, by this promise to be his wife? Why not wait? Who knows but that those hateful chains which now bind me to a detested marriage may be soon severed? I have heard tidings of Lady Glendinnon's health, which tell that it is most precarious; and then, lovely one, all will be laid at your feet — my hand, my heart, my all. And, sweetest, in the meantime ——"

Car started. What noise was that she heard? Her quick ear had caught the sound of footsteps from behind — the rustling of branches, as if some one was retreating in that direction.

"Lord Glendinnon, do you hear anything?" she said, pressing still closer to his side.

"Nothing, fair one, but the beating of this little heart."

"But I do," she said, starting up, and standing in an attitude of listening. "My ears are never deceived. Some one has been here listening to our words, and I am lost — yes, lost for ever. Oh, if ever my father hears of what I have done, he will never forgive me. Let me go; who knows it may not be him or Norman, and then — oh, do not detain me," she cried, impatiently; "do not follow me close; I had better go alone."

And so saying, with inconceivable swiftness she fled away, looking neither to the right nor to the left, relaxing not her speed until she reached the side door, and then, entering noiselessly, she found herself at length within her chamber, and throwing herself across her bed, she well-nigh fainted from terror and agitation.

It was very late, or rather early in the morning ; nearer three than two. At eight they were to be at the station ; little time had the weary and now miserable girl for sleep or refreshment.

Dragging off her shawl, in which she had enveloped herself, she determined not to undress. She felt neither strength nor will for the exertion.

“What matters it? Every one will soon know the whole story. Whoever it was must have heard and seen everything ; and though, after all, there was not much harm in what was either said, or done, how dreadfully it will sound when it is whispered about with all the additions ill-nature will invent. And, gracious heavens! Papa, what will he say? and Mamma, who already considers me a disgrace to the family? I know it was that wretch, Norman Lawless. It is just like a deed

of his. Well, *that* affair is at an end with a vengeance. But oh! good gracious, what will he do?—murder that dear man, or perhaps wreak his vengeance upon me. As far as I am concerned, the sooner he blows out my brains the better; it is all over with me. I always said I was doomed to perdition. Oh, what shall I do?—what shall I do?”

And sobs and tears such as she had never before shed now burst from her overcharged heart. “Wretched, unfortunate girl,” she might indeed have called herself.

At length exhaustion caused her to fall asleep; and when Fenton entered the room at seven o'clock, she found her young lady in a deep slumber, lying dressed on the outside of the bed, her hair all dishevelled, her face pale, the traces of tears still lingering on her cheek,—a very different spec-

tacle to the radiant Hebe usually personified by the beautiful Car Eversfield.

“What can have happened?” Fenton exclaimed, as she looked with affright on her young lady, and saw the shawl and veil lying on the ground. “Where has she been? What mad prank has she been playing? There is something very wrong in the wind, I feel certain sure; and Thomas says he has just taken a letter into Sir Hector’s room, from Captain Lawless, who started suddenly as soon as it was light. But here comes the General — Oh, Heaven protect us, how wild he looks!”

“Car,” said the father, as he entered the room, in the sternest of voices, “what is all this about?”

“Miss Eversfield is asleep, Sir Hector; I found her lying in this strange way; I believe she has never taken off her clothes this blessed night.”

"Fenton, you may go; I will ring when Miss Eversfield wants you." And striding up to the bed, he saw his daughter, his beautiful favourite child, already so changed in his sight and his affections.

"Car," he exclaimed in a loud voice, at the same time shaking the sleeper by the shoulder—for the girl slept the heavy sleep of utter prostration — "Do you hear me? you must get up this moment." Car opened her eyes in bewilderment.

"What is the matter?" she exclaimed, starting up quickly, as her eyes opened and fell upon her father's stern face. "Oh, Papa, Papa, forgive me ;" she cried, "don't look at me thus, or I shall die."

"Die, you wicked girl; you have long been dead to anything like decency or reason. Get up, I say, and let us begone before worse even happens." And he rang the bell.

Car sprang from the bed, and before he was able to resist she had flung her arms round her father's neck, and there tenaciously she hung, weeping piteously. With almost savage force he extricated himself from her clinging grasp, and then sinking on her knees, she cried, "Tell me what have you heard; I know I have done wrong, but not such wrong as I believe you imagine."

"Read this letter," he said.

And, still on her knees, she read these words :—

"Dear Sir Hector,

"Your daughter is free. Ask *her* for an explanation of her conduct. Never more will she be molested by the solicitations of the man 'she hates and detests,' and who, in his turn, now rejects her as utterly unworthy of his love.

"Faithfully yours,

"NORMAN LAWLESS."

"Papa, I will tell you all. Last night, it was so fine, I was leaning out of my window. Lord Glendinnon passed; he stopped and asked me—no doubt it was merely in joke—to come out and take a stroll. I foolishly accepted his offer. We walked a short time by the river. That is all, *really all*,—wrong I own, but not so bad as to create all this anger. Norman, I suppose, acted the part of eavesdropper. Papa, speak to me; I shall lie here at your feet until you say that you will not always be so very angry with your poor Car, who henceforth will be so good."

She crawled towards him, holding by the skirts of his coat, and looking up at him beseechingly, her long hair hanging over her face and neck, her tear-stained face raised with so piteous an expression that a casual beholder would never have recog-



nised in the sorrowing Magdalen, Car Eversfield.

But the General looked not upon her. He stood, that fine gallant officer, mute and motionless, his face livid, his teeth clenched, and there was an expression in his eye which made one quail to behold.

He thought no longer of the girl before him—that creature he had idolised. No; his thoughts were with the man who had dared to bring this child of his as a lowly suppliant for mercy at his feet—he who beguiled her to commit an act of impropriety, to say the least of it, which, if known, would tarnish her reputation for ever — of that man who had destroyed the fair prospect which was opening before her, the protection of an honourable husband. Could he live and endure this without chastising the offender? Yes, he must go to him, and tell him that he was a fiend and a scoundrel—that

with his blood he must answer for his perfidy.

But then again — and he looked down at the poor crushed thing at his feet—that would indeed drag her conspicuously before the world, and destroy her for ever. No, even that satisfaction was denied to him; and then he thought of his sick wife, and the unfortunate man struck his forehead with his hand. As it was, what would be her mother's disappointment when he brought the disgraced girl back to her home — when that very morning she would have received the joyful tidings of Car's engagement to Captain Lawless? There was no alternative; he must just take her back, and leave his vengeance to God.

So, heaving a groan-like sigh, he said to Fenton, who entered the room,—

“Fenton, get Miss Eversfield ready to start at eight. You must see there is a

great deal wrong here ; but you have been so long with Lady Julia, that, as a friend, I trust you to say as little as possible on the subject."

And the good woman, almost as distressed as her master, proceeded to raise poor Car, who just now was a real object of pity.

She passively submitted to all she did for her, even to swallowing a cup of coffee which was administered.

Just as they were about to start, Lady Millicent entered the room in her dressing-gown, to make her last hurried adieus.

Car was all ready equipped to depart, her thick veil down, and she had not a good view of her face, but was struck by her silence, and the convulsive manner with which she embraced her friend at parting. There was no time for questionings ; but Millicent felt chilled and sad, and

it was with a strange oppression at her heart that she joined the breakfast-table after. She looked around for Captain Lawless, but he did not appear.

Presently Lord Westover sententiously exclaimed, "I miss my beautiful neighbour in her usual place by my side this morning, for I have lately been so accustomed '*vivre près de la rose*,' that it will be hard to exist without her. It certainly is one of the first-rate luxuries to breathe even in the atmosphere of beauty ; to me it has become almost indispensable. Car Eversfield has quite spoilt me — heigho !" sighed this old Sybarite of a Lord, "I suppose Lawless was of the same opinion, for he is off too."

"I thought he was not going till after breakfast," said Lady Millicent.

"I had a note saying that he had remembered an engagement which rendered it imperative for him to be in London at

an early hour. He started before the Eversfields."

Lady Millicent instinctively looked at Lord Glendinnon. He was reading his letters, but she fancied there was something altogether different in the expression of his countenance; and as he looked up suddenly, and met for an instant her scrutinizing gaze, he evidently gave symptoms of some confusion.

"Good Heavens! has that man been doing any more mischief?" she thought; and then her thoughts reverted to Car's extraordinary demeanour, and Fenton's pale, distressed face. "He is such a wretch; nothing is too bad for him; and as for Car——"

And, with anxiety at her heart for the fate of one for whom, from long intimacy, she really felt an interest she could not shake off, Lady Millicent left the breakfast-

table, but not before she had heard Lord Glendinnon inform Lady Westover that a letter just received called him also away, and therefore he could not remain, as he had wished, a day or two longer.

And certainly Lord Glendinnon felt, when he drove away from Westover, that he had played the fool rather too far, and that he had indeed "*put his foot into it.*"

## CHAPTER VII.

WE must crave pardon for making a long digression, but for the furtherance of our story we are forced to entail upon our readers what we know by experience is a most provoking interruption to the interest which may have been previously called forth.

It cannot, however, be helped ; and we only promise to get over the episode with as little delay as possible.

Lord and Lady Sunderland lived principally at a country seat called Bellemont, in the county of ——. Their family consisted of two daughters, and a son the youngest of the family.

Education was her Ladyship's mania. Masters of every description were forced upon her son and daughters in London; and when in the country, added to talented governesses, professionals were engaged to pass any vacant time they had to bestow at Bellemont.

Although the young ladies were not devoted amateurs in the science of music, their brother, the young Lord Sinclair, was a *fanatico* of the most enthusiastic description. At the earliest age the Opera had been his greatest delight, and its celebrities the heroes and heroines of his imagination. This feeling was more than ever nourished by the acquaintance formed in his own home with a singer then in the full tide of popularity.

La Rosalinda, as she was always designated, was a scientific as well as most delightful performer, her character unim-



peachable; and Lady Sunderland, having previously made her acquaintance and ascertained the respectability of her antecedents, had at length induced the cantatrice to make an annual visit to Bellemont in the capacity of instructress in singing, for the time being, to her two daughters.

A most intimate friendship had sprung up between the family and this talented Italian; and Lord Sinclair, then still at Eton, looked forward to his summer vacation with still greater zest, always anticipating the delight of La Rosalinda's presence, to say nothing of her enchanting music. And thus several seasons rolled by.

\* \* \* \* \*

The family were all assembled at the luncheon-table one Saturday afternoon. "Mother," Lord Sinclair exclaimed, as he

joined the party, "I have just been introduced to the new curate old Bennett has left in charge of his flock whilst he is abroad for his health."

"He is a man of good family, I believe," remarked Lady Sunderland.

"Yes, I hear he is an Honourable,—brother to Lord Curraghmore, an Hibernian viscount. I can tell you that he is a regular specimen, in appearance, of a wild Irishman."

"That certainly does not sound clerical," was the general remark.

"No, indeed, nor does it look clerical; but, however, I like the fellow; he is fond of music, I find, and that shows that he is worth something."

"Has he a brogue?"

"Yes, he has just a *soupeçon* of one, but it is not offensive to the ear, and his voice struck me as 'most musical, most

melancholy.' There is something peculiar-looking in the fellow altogether. I quite long to hear the service performed to-morrow."

"Is he handsome?" the ladies asked.

"Well, I suppose you all would say so, men and women think so differently upon those subjects. I think he looks as if he ought to be caught and put up in a cage to be tamed; however, you will all be able to judge for yourselves. I asked him to dinner," he added, "as you desired,"—turning to Lord Sunderland,— "but he excused himself, saying he was so occupied, having only just arrived."

"I hope he is a gentlemanly person," Lady Sunderland remarked.

"My dear mother, he is an Honourable: will not that at once vouch for his gentlemanly qualities?" Lord Sinclair laughingly answered.

"I fear, not quite," Lady Sunderland replied; "I wish all the aristocracy bore that distinguishing stamp."

There was no small curiosity excited in the ladies, the next morning, to see this new preacher who was to occupy the pulpit of the old and, we must allow, very humdrum clergyman who had for so many years officiated in the village church.

The Ladies Sinclair, their brother, and Signora Rosalinda always sat in the front of the organ-loft, taking a conspicuous part in the service of the choir. Most kind and interested had ever been the distinguished performer in the singing of this little secluded church, and the strains which were heard each Sunday, whilst she remained at Bellemont, issuing from this simple house of God, might well have drawn crowds of entranced listeners. This particular Sunday Lord Sinclair had been more than

ever anxious that the music should be first-rate.

The organ was a splendid one — scarcely, indeed, in accordance with the interior of this rustic church ; — a gift, of course, from the Bellemont family, and upon which it was the young Lord's greatest delight to play for hours every day.

It was whilst practising the Voluntary which he himself intended to perform the next day, that he first encountered Mr. Valentine Lawless, the new curate, whose vehement delight at the performance propitiated at once the young *fanatico*.

“ We will surprise this wild man of the woods ! ” Lord Sinclair exclaimed, whilst practising that evening the chants and music for the morrow ; and, finally, having himself accompanied the Rosalinda in the solo of a splendid anthem she had promised to sing, he exclaimed, “ How sorry I

am that I cannot watch his movements whilst you are singing, Signora. How he will ever be able to remain at his post I know not; he appears to me as if he could not, by any possibility, keep `still when excited, so restless and impulsive he looks—always ready to spring forth when roused by any peculiar feeling.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The service had not commenced when the Sunderlands entered the church. Every eye immediately fixed itself upon the vestry door, watching for the appearance of the new curate.

It opened at length, and a tall young man walked forth and ascended the reading-desk; young indeed he looked—so far, more so than they had anticipated; and when he rose from his knees, and his face was wholly revealed to the congregation, what an extraordinary countenance was

disclosed ! The effect was almost startling to the beholders to look upon, — those dark, wild eyes, the strange impassioned expression denoting itself in every feature ; and when his lips at length moved, and at first, in subdued accents, he commenced the service, the liquid cadence of his voice thrilled to the heart of every listener. It sounded like music to the unaccustomed ears of those who had so long heard nought but the monotonous croaking drawl of their worthy minister.

The service proceeded, and the effect of this charmed voice did not decrease. It rose high and clear during the singing, and sunk to the most touching devotional pathos whilst offering the various prayers, petitions, and confessions of our beautiful service.

He prayed, as if he felt each word, for himself and others — apparently wrapt in

sincere devotion — the world seemingly forgotten for the time being, and the enthusiastic spirit wafted to heaven.

But soon earthwards it came.

Rosalinda stood conspicuously forward in the gallery and commenced the anthem.

She had been previously ordered by young Sinclair not to allow her voice to be heard in the previous chants. Even in the *Te Deum* she was implored not to utter a sound.

It was his fancy that the wonderful organ of the far-famed cantatrice should burst forth unexpectedly and electrify the new auditor ; and Rosalinda, always kindly indulgent to all the whims and wishes of her talented young friend and enthusiastic patron, entered keenly into all his plans, and prepared to exert herself to display the full treasures of her glorious voice, and to sing as well as if a large audience, con-



sisting even of royalty, the nobles of the land, and the most critical of *dilettanti*, were assembled to listen to her strains, instead of the simple rural congregation now met within this country church.

Ah! poor Rosalinda! how little did she imagine, whilst her rich notes gushed forth, swelling into thrilling fervour as the sense of the holy words touched her soul with their devotional meaning, and her eyes were raised with real piety to Him whom in song she thus addressed, that her fate was about to be irrevocably fixed.

Lord Sinclair would indeed have been satisfied could he have watched the curate whilst the anthem was proceeding. At the very first intonation of Rosalinda's voice he might have been seen to start violently, his eyes to dilate; and as the strains proceeded, a visible trembling was perceptible throughout his frame, his face becoming deadly pale.

Fortunately, the attention of all within those walls was wholly occupied by listening to the anthem, so that few remarked the extraordinary agitation of the young man as he stood at the communion-table; but when the last notes of Rosalinda's accents died away, and he was obliged to commence the service, those who listened could scarcely have recognised in that altered, trembling voice, the rich, manly tones which had just before so deeply impressed every hearer.

Rosalinda was not allowed to join in the hymn which followed.

No, that would spoil the grand effect of the anthem, Sinclair insisted; and although the great *artiste* would willingly have united her voice in the simple pious song which followed — for hers was a gentle Christian spirit, poor Rosalinda's — she followed obediently the orders of her young *directeur*,

and echoed only in her heart those artless words of praise.

The clergyman did not appear in the pulpit until the hymn was ended, and as his pale face again gleamed forth upon the congregation, when rising from his knees after a lengthened prayer, there were few hearts within the church this day which did not beat high with almost nervous anticipation of the sermon.

The young man commenced in a low and uncertain tone, but soon he began to warm with the subject, — his eyes brightened ; some colour took the place of the extreme pallor of his cheeks ; animation, tempered with devotion, gave expression to his countenance, beautifying it to a marvellous extent, — and then such a flood of eloquence flowed from his lips.

His language partook of the oratory which is so indigenous to those of his

country who are at all gifted by nature with eloquence. It is impossible to describe what was the effect upon all assembled that day, except by saying that it seemed to take away the breath of those who listened as if their very lives hung upon the words of one who might have personified in his looks his eloquence, his vehement earnestness—a John the Baptist preaching, in the wilderness, words of such life-giving import.

And there was one whose ears and heart drank in every word which issued from this young preacher's lips—who, seated in the organ-gallery, now pressed forward with clasped hands, distended eyes, her whole being abstracted from aught on earth but the one object before her.

As he proceeded, warming to an energy which communicated itself to every member of his congregation, the impassioned

Italian, the accomplished actress, seemed almost to identify herself with the preacher, her agitation becoming so uncontrollable.

No, it was not acting, that hysterical burst of tears which shook her frame, and threatened to become but too conspicuous. No, it was the genuine impulse of a nature which hitherto, with strange self-command, kept in strict control, was in itself full of the deepest, the profoundest passion.

Yes, like a mighty current long restrained, it burst all bounds, and swept down at once every barrier.

Yes, poor Rosalinda, thy fate was sealed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

BRIEFLY will we pass over the events which so quickly followed this eventful Sunday.

Valentine Lawless from this period became an *habitué* at Bellemont. The young Lord Sinclair became infatuated with his society—never satisfied but in his companionship.

Not only were his musical talents a passport to the young Lord's favour, but in out-door sports the curate proved a most valuable and experienced adjunct.

The young man had been born and bred

up in one of the wildest parts of Ireland, his home the dilapidated old castle of his ancestors, which had almost become uninhabitable owing to the poverty of the family, each successor for many years past having, by his reckless habits, further impoverished the property.

Valentine and his brother, the present Viscount, some years older than himself, had spent their early days at Castle Lawless with their widowed mother, receiving little or no education. Lord Curraghmore, with a handsome person and well-sounding title to his name, managed to make his way in the world ; but Valentine for many years led a life of perfect neglect, although to him it was one of thorough enjoyment.

A wonderful genius for 'music marked his earliest days, and with a very slight knowledge of the science, which he had

learnt from his mother, he soon became an almost self-taught genius, spending the time, when not employed in the sports of the field (so abundantly supplied both in fishing and shooting upon the estate), in singing and playing upon an instrument which, though none of the best, he considered in the light of a friend and companion.

The only person, save his mother, who took the slightest interest in the youth, was a Protestant clergyman who had a living in those wild regions, and who beheld with regret the wasted existence of this most peculiar boy. Soon discovering what talents lay uncultivated in that enthusiastic soul, he kindly did what he could for him; and poor Lady Curraghmore, as long as she lived, assisted to the utmost of her limited powers in cultivating young Valentine's mind, and in fostering the incli-



nation he decidedly manifested for the Church.

She died when her son was about seventeen; and the rector, with the greatest difficulty, obliged his brother — who could now well afford it, having made a rich marriage—to defray the necessary expenses for Valentine's career at Dublin College.

Brilliantly he passed through the ordeal, and finally was qualified to take orders; and Lord Curraghmore further exerted his influence to obtain for him a curacy in England: and thus it was that we find Valentine Lawless a temporary inmate of the Bellemont Rectory.

Lord Curraghmore had married a rich woman, a Scotch heiress, the only daughter of a confirmed invalid, who had for years never quitted his Highland home.

There the future bride of the handsome Viscount had spent her days, her mind

narrowing within the contracted circle in which she existed. She was plain in person, and in no way ingratiating in manner, — no alluring object, save to the penniless fortune-hunter, who must, in marrying this unattractive woman, only look upon her golden charms. Her enormous wealth was the talk of the whole country side; and Lord Curraghmore, who really was in a most pitiable plight, and who scarcely knew which way to turn for a shilling, his fine property encumbered to the very last farthing, his castle falling into irremediable decay, listened with eagerness to the glowing accounts of the possessions of this golden goddess.

He made up his mind, at any rate, to try his luck in this quarter, and, spunging upon the resources of a friend, managed to get himself franked down to the moors adjoining the Highland territory of the rich Laird Macpherson.

Splendidly handsome was the Viscount at this period, his address most insinuating, his voice seemingly attuned to allure a fair one's senses; but the question was, to gain an entrance into that old grim, grey house.

However, by some clever manœuvre he did contrive to throw himself in Miss Macpherson's way; and although, at first sight, a natural shudder passed through his frame when he thought of her as his wife, a counteracting remembrance soon checked the feeling which had attempted to hold him back from pursuing his scheme.

"What else can I do, destruction staring me in the face?" was his inward ejaculation.

So, resolutely he set himself to the task, endeavouring to ignore the identity of the red hair, high cheek bones, and freckled skin of the Scottish maiden. No, indeed,

nothing else could interpose between the yawning jaws of the Queen's Bench.

So at it he went, improving this unforeseen opportunity to such an extent that he felt quite certain that, notwithstanding that iceberg of frigidity represented by the grand representative of many tens of thousands a year, there still existed a vulnerable spot in that cold heart which, if once ignited, might soon spread into a flame of fire.

And so it proved. We will not enter into the particulars of this uninteresting courtship; suffice it to say, that the father most opportunely died, leaving his daughter, who had been of age some years, sole mistress of her hand and heart, which was bestowed without the slightest hesitation on Lord Curraghmore.

Her fortune, certainly, with the true cautiousness of her nation, she caused to be strictly tied up, so that her poverty-

stricken Lord could never make ducks and drakes of it; but with a degree of generosity wonderful in such a woman, and displaying how completely her heart was concerned in the matter, she determined, if possible, to raise the fallen fortunes of her husband's house by endeavouring by degrees to pay off the encumbrances which rendered his really fine patrimony so completely valueless. And so they married. A good wife, in her way, the lady made to a most indifferent husband; and, moreover, notwithstanding his many failures in his conjugal conduct, she still retained towards him the only tender feeling she ever bestowed on any living person excepting her young son, who, with all her stern coldness of temperament, she weakly idolised and indulged.

But to return to the poor younger brother, Valentine, whom no splendid mar-

riage had enriched, but who lived upon the niggardly pittance the Viscount doled out so grudgingly by the purse-bearer, his wife.

A new era of his life had indeed commenced, — one of ecstatic bliss it seemed to the enthusiastic young man.

The hours of each day seemed too short for the joy they contained. What strains of melody were for ever filling the spacious halls of Bellemont!

Music, that food of love, that vehicle of passion, seemed never now to cease.

We have promised not to linger over this episode; in a few words, therefore, we will say, that Rosalinda, who had passed unscathed nearly five-and-thirty summers, — who had turned a deaf ear to proposals which might have raised her to a far different sphere to that of a public singer, — who had astonished the whole London world by her frigidity, her almost un-

natural repugnance to matrimony, devoting apparently her whole energies to the attainment of a certain sum which would render her independent and enable her to live in her own *bella Italia*, now succumbed, seemingly without a struggle, to the influence of this wild-looking youth, many years her junior.

Yes; when, at the expiration of the time when her services were engaged at Bellemont, she took leave of her friends, it was with anxiety Lady Sunderland saw her depart, wondering what would be the end of all this.

But the wonder was of short duration.

Valentine Lawless had not appeared for some days, and soon they heard that he had engaged a neighbouring clergyman to perform his duty for a few Sundays.

All this looked ominous, and the Sunderland family, really feeling much affection

and interest in the Italian, were uneasy and uncomfortable about her. A letter soon arrived in the Signora's well-known hand, and it was signed

ROSALINDA LAWLESS.



## CHAPTER IX.

ROSALINDA had indeed given herself and all her hard-earned gains, without a thought or scruple, into her young husband's keeping. She loved with all the fire and ardour of her Southern blood; never for one moment weighing the cost in any balance save that of her ardent feelings.

She had for some years inhabited a small *bijou* of a house in Curzon Street, an old aunt superintending her *ménage*, and acting as her constant *chaperon* at the Opera and every public place at which she was engaged to appear.

This cherished little domicile she left in

charge of the Italian relative, and immediately after the marriage the enamoured pair set off for Italy; Lawless having of course given up his curacy.

They had determined on spending at least a year abroad: what would afterwards be their career they never thought nor cared. The present moment of infatuation absorbed every idea of the future; they only revelled in their present world of perfect bliss.

Yes, the shutters of that well-known house were for the most part closed; the old aunt continued to occupy a small back room; and the opposite neighbours not a little missed the voice which, when summer came and the open windows were indispensable, burst forth in such gushing melody from the habitation of this renowned songstress.

And it was quite a deprivation to the

star-gazers no longer to be able to catch glimpses of La Rosalinda, as she stepped lightly into her brougham, to be whirled away to her various rehearsals; to speculate upon and to watch her numerous visitors, from the black-bearded professionals to the coronetted carriages and stately ladies, who considered it no degradation to visit and patronise this gifted and most irreproachable singer.

All was stillness and solitude in the little baby-house of a dwelling, before always ringing with the rich notes of music and of song, so filled with every luxury and every sort of ornament, of *virtu*, and other embellishments, most of them presents from her numerous friends and admirers.

Yes, it was a changed spot, never again to shine with joy and gladness to poor Rosalinda.

\* \* \* \* \*

The year passed by, and then another, and another. We find the married pair changed,—not that their love had grown cold; no, that still remained fresh, as on the day which united their destinies;—but the stern realities of life were pressing upon their minds, particularly upon that of the wife. The cares of the world, the uncertainty of riches, seemed facts, which began by degrees to impress themselves upon their minds.

On the Lawless's arrival in Italy, Rome was selected as their place of residence, and, like many other newly-married people, they began imprudently.

Lawless, without the slightest knowledge as to the value of money, finding himself for the first time in his life in the unlimited control of what he considered interminable treasure, spent it *ad libitum*.

Yes, he must have everything of the

best for his beloved. A palazzo, servants, horses, carriages. His name and rank in life were at once passports to his admission into society, and his wife's celebrity enhanced the value of his position.

Little heeded the *élite* then congregated in the eternal city, that the Honourable Mrs. Lawless had been an Opera singer. Her reputation was well known as an artiste of unexceptionable character; so soon she became the rage in all societies, as well as her husband, whose voice, cultivated by his admiring wife, soon became almost equal to Rosalinda's.

And so time went merrily on, the couple little heeding that on its wings also flew the hard-earned professional gains, — the work of years.

Rosalinda had not the heart or courage to check the happiness of her adored young husband: she certainly lived in a state of

morbid infatuation, poor soul! only trembling lest by a word she might break the spell which bound him to her. She remembered the disparity in their ages,—he only twenty-four, she so many years his senior.

No, she could not tell him that her money was melting away, in a manner that soon began to terrify her with the thought as to what would be the end of all these reckless doings.

However, at last the day of reckoning came. A child was about to be born, and Rosalinda's reason seemed to be restored when she looked forward to what would be the fate of the unborn babe.

She spoke at last; told her husband that, if they went on thus, her last thousand would be gone, and implored him to break up this expensive establishment and return to England, where he at least might pursue his profession, and she — oh, how ready she

would be to work, to slave for her beloved one, could that be permitted now that she had merged into a grade so much higher. Valentine Lawless, impulsive upon every subject, at once succumbed, with vehement protestations, and expressions of deep contrition for his thoughtless extravagance, his selfishness, in thus having impoverished his generous, his beloved wife.

"I will retrieve the past, my dearest," he earnestly protested. "It will be my part to work, whilst you will bring up our child, my beloved Rosalinda. You will not mind living with me, even in the quiet country. My brother has influence; I will ask him to exert his interest to procure me some Church preferment. I can take pupils. I am ready to do anything in the meantime. Forgive my thoughtlessness, thou angel of goodness! and in a few years, perhaps, I shall be able to pay back to you all that I have so wickedly spent."

Poor Rosalinda ! it grieved yet delighted her to hear those earnest words. For herself how little she cared for money : it was for him alone that she was covetous.

There was just time to reach England before the period when Rosalinda's child was to be born ; and hastily making their preparations, the Lawlesses commenced without further delay their journey, so trying to one so soon to become a mother.

However, they reached Dover in safety ; but Mrs. Lawless felt so ill that it was deemed expedient that no time should be lost before she reached her home, and leaving her husband to arrange about the luggage and to follow by the next train, she started at once for Curzon Street.

What a return to her once little gay nest of peace and prosperity ! Her troubles had already commenced, the pangs of labour had begun to assail her, and soon in in-



creasing anguish she was calling forth the name of the one on earth whose charmed presence she fancied could soften every pain.

She was lying on a sofa, listening for every sound of footsteps approaching, looking anxiously towards the door, hoping to see her husband enter, when it opened, indeed, but only to admit her maid, holding in her hand a telegraphic message.

It was from Dover, and ran as follows:—

“A fearful collision on the railway at ——. Mr. Valentine Lawless dangerously injured; lies in a hopeless state at the — station.”

“I must go to him!” shrieked the poor wife, as she started from the sofa; but of course that was impossible.

The old aunt started immediately, but she never saw Valentine Lawless again alive; and ordering that his remains should be brought to Curzon Street, she returned

to find her niece in a state baffling all description.

A little daughter was at length born, and the mother lingered a few days, but brain fever, not to be subdued, came on. She continued in a state of delirium till a few hours before her death, and then calmly she listened to every particular of her husband's death; the blessed hope of again meeting him depriving death of all its terrors.

"He loved his Saviour," she murmured, "and taught me to love Him."

Rosalinda implored her aunt to be as kind to her child as she had been to her, and then feebly pronounced the words "Lady Sunderland,—would that I could see her!"

A messenger was immediately dispatched to Carleton Gardens; she might be there. Most fortunately her Ladyship was in London, and lost no time in repairing to Curzon

Street; in fact, she had read the account of poor Lawless's death in the papers, and expedited her return to London in order to look after Rosalinda, for whom she felt the most heartfelt pity.

As she entered the dismally closed house, she paused in the hall and said to the servant, "I will remain here till you have ascertained whether Mrs. Lawless can see me," at the same time opening the dining-room door; then, starting back in horror as a black coffin, standing upon tressels in the middle of the small room, met her affrighted gaze. It contained the corpse of the once brilliant, joyful Valentine Lawless, and there it remained waiting to be accompanied to the grave by that of his devoted wife.

Lady Sunderland had never before, during the course of her smooth existence, felt so utterly shocked. Death and its grim accom-

paniments were unfamiliar to this daughter of prosperity. She was quite overpowered when she was led to the bedside of the dying woman, and looked upon that countenance, so changed by grief.

Rosalinda had scarcely breath remaining to speak. She could only press the kind lady's hand in her feeble grasp, and turn her eyes imploringly first upon the baby who lay on a pillow by her side, and then upon her.

A few spoonfuls of wine were administered, and there appeared a rally in the departing woman. She essayed again to speak.

"That poor child,—will you see that she is cared for?"

"I will, I will, Rosalinda, believe me," sobbed the Countess. "I will never lose sight of your child, this I solemnly declare to you, dear Rosalinda."

"Then, indeed, I shall depart in peace," were the last words Rosalinda ever uttered. She sank rapidly after this, and before Lady Sunderland quitted Curzon Street, the gifted Italian, once the popular idol of the day, calmly breathed her last sigh.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a spectacle that made every heart bleed to watch the two hearses as they wended their way to the cemetery, in which husband and wife were interred in one grave; so that in death they were not divided.

Much sensation did the mournful catastrophe create for a brief space in the wonder-loving London world.

The house and its contents sold at a fabulous price. Everyone was anxious to become a purchaser of something which had belonged to poor Rosalinda. This was advantageous to the little orphan; and the

Sunderlands, who commissioned their own man of business to superintend the affairs of the deceased mother, announced that a surplus remained, which, with the produce of the sale and some remaining invested money, would serve to maintain the old aunt and the child in comfort.

Lady Sunderland would not allow the trinkets to be sold, and many a valuable jewel, presented to the talented singer, she took charge of, until the little Rosalinda should be old enough to wear them.

The poor old Madame Rinaldo, overwhelmed with sorrow, for her niece had been to her more than a daughter, could only be roused to anything like exertion by the sight of the baby. London was repugnant to her feelings; for her country she panted; but Lady Sunderland felt that her promise to the dying mother was imperative. If the aunt went to Italy, the child

must remain in England ; she must never lose sight of the orphaned babe.

So at length it was decided that Madame Rinaldo should take up her abode in a pleasant cottage, inhabited by a respectable widow woman, in the village of Bellemont. Lady Sunderland, with prompt kindness, saw to everything herself, made every arrangement for the reception of the heart-stricken Italian and her charge.

And there the little Rosalinda was nurtured with the fondest care by her doting aunt, whose only thought was centred in administering to the indulgence of every wish and whim of this wayward child ; for as years went on, the little girl gave every symptom of a nature which, had it been properly managed, might have prevented much of that self-will which cost her many a pang and trouble as she advanced towards womanhood.

In vain Lady Sunderland and her daughters admonished the aunt to be less injudicious in her partiality towards the child, to correct her when fits of naughtiness rendered coercion necessary.

No, she could not say harsh a word to this most idolised child, who, naturally clever and talented, with an ear for music, and a voice promising to equal that of her mother, grew up to the age of twelve years, ignorant, wild, and wholly ungovernable.

At this time Madame Rinaldo died suddenly, after an illness of a very few days; and now what was to be done with Rosalinda?

Lady Sunderland considered it her duty to write to Lord Curraghmore, to communicate to him the knowledge of his niece's position; and proposed that, as there was a schoolroom, and a governess in his house, educating his two daughters, perhaps Lady



Curraghmore and himself would have no objection to admit under their roof this orphan niece.

The request was immediately negatived. Lady Curraghmore objected to a strange child being domesticated with her daughters.

Lord Curraghmore advised that the girl should be sent to some school, "and then, perhaps," he added, "we may occasionally allow her to visit us during the holidays."

But to this proposal Lady Sunderland felt many objections. Linda, for so she had been always called, was the last child in the world to be left to the tender mercies of a school. What would become of her, with her excitable feelings and temper, thrown amongst so many,—left to the guidance of those who would neither understand nor tolerate her?

Poor Rosalinda's child! and kind Lady Sunderland's heart was heavy, for she felt

the utmost interest in the little girl, notwithstanding her many faults, her often repulsive manner, even to those who were so kind to her.

"Mother," said Lady Elizabeth Sinclair, "let us take charge of Linda, and engage a governess to educate her; in this great house they will be no trouble to anyone."

"I have also thought of this plan," Lady Sunderland replied; "and it would be one of pleasure instead of trouble, if Linda was a more engaging child; but she is so troublesome, and, moreover, so little affectionate to those who, I must say, have ever been kind to her."

"Yes, I quite agree with you," Lady Elizabeth replied; "but I believe it will be the only way to make anything of the child; she has been so spoilt by that poor, weak old woman, that she requires regular discipline. I am quite ready to assist in

this work of reformation. How unlike in disposition Linda is to her poor mother, who was so gentle, so lovable, notwithstanding her fierce-blooded Italian extraction."

Lady Elizabeth was the unmarried daughter of the family. A spine complaint had rendered her deformed, and her health had contracted her mental vision of things in general, souring her temper and causing her to form her opinions severely, and dogmatically, making no excuses for the infirmity of human nature. She had lived little in the world, therefore her ideas were not derived from experience, and were often uncharitable, although, at the same time, she meant well, and was sincerely anxious to do rightly and religiously in all things, and as certainly

"To be good and disagreeable is treason to virtue,"

so we fear in the latter category we must include Lady Elizabeth Sinclair.

In this case the best feelings of her heart were called forth ; for not only did she feel really great interest in the child, but the memory of her mother was one of the greenest spots in her painful existence.

What would she not do for Rosalinda's daughter?—that bright being whose remembrance was for ever hovering over her recollection, and which even still possessed the power of exciting in the dulled, disappointed heart of the deformed woman, sensations of past delight and hope ?

Yes, the little Linda should be henceforth her charge. Poor Lady Elizabeth ! little did she foresee the troubles which would attend the labour of friendship, rendered thus difficult through her own stubborn and narrow-minded views and contracted heart.

## CHAPTER X.

LINDA had, on the death of Madame Rinaldo, been staying with a kind widow lady, who had for many years been domiciled in the village; she had always been kind to the little girl, and in the absence of the Bellemont family had offered a temporary home to Linda. In a pitiable state was the forlorn girl when she could realise the idea of her *cara zia's* death, for so she called her fondly loved old aunt.

Her vehement, ill-regulated feelings burst forth with a degree of violence which frightened the gentle and not very strong-minded Mrs. Turner, whose patient en-

duration of any trials, which in the course of her life must have befallen her, had hardly prepared her for such passionate outbreaks.

Violent emotion, however, generally rapidly exhausts itself; and Linda, after a fearful access of despairing sorrow, soon became first calmer, and then by degrees her restless habits recommenced, and her enjoyment of perfect liberty and idleness returned.

Mrs. Turner, who was much esteemed by the Sunderland family, was in correspondence with Lady Elizabeth upon the subject of Linda, and it was by their especial request that the girl remained with her until they had matured their plans for her future.

Mrs. Turner thought, with a sinking sensation at her kind indulgent heart, of the cold, uncompromising, haughty exterior of

Lady Elizabeth. How would she ever be able to foster tender feelings in the heart of that strange, wild girl? And Lady Sunderland, kind and gentle as she was, she would have little voice in the matter. No one ever interfered with Lady Elizabeth, or presumed to dispute her opinion.

An invalid for years, compassion for her infirmities and sufferings had rendered it habitual to all with whom she lived to succumb to her every wish, and to her opinions upon every subject in which she chose to take a part. And this abnegation to her rule became, as time went on, somewhat of an infliction to her parents, particularly to her mother, and to all who came within the province of her imperious rule.

And in her keeping, Linda, with all the peculiarities of her temperament, the disadvantages of her hitherto indulged bringing up, inheriting probably much of the ex-

citable feelings of her father, the Southern blood of her mother, soon found herself firmly grasped.

Lady Elizabeth was delighted with the idea of the task before her, she saw it was one of difficulty; so much the better, the greater the exultation at the success of the undertaking.

Rarey's heart never beat so proudly after having vanquished a vicious young colt, before pronounced unapproachable, untamable, than did that of Lady Elizabeth at the thought of the triumph she anticipated in taming this wild young girl; and Lady Sunderland, glad to see her daughter so brightened up and interested, rejoiced in the prospect of little Linda's arrival, although the kind lady rather winced when she listened to the stringent preparations they were making for her reception.

Three dull rooms in a remote part of



the house were prepared for the governess and her pupil; a sinister-looking German maid was engaged to wait upon them; and although such instruments of torture were not in the same demand as formerly, yet Lady Elizabeth chose to have them there, in the shape of backboards, dumbbells, reclining boards, &c. &c.

It was a fine summer day when Linda came to Bellemont. Lady Elizabeth herself arrived in the carriage to escort her to her new home.

Mrs. Turner had been all the morning endeavouring to comfort and reconcile the poor child to the trial which awaited her.

"Remember your mother's wishes, dear Linda," she said; "it is as she wished. The assurance of Lady Sunderland's care for you made her depart in peace."

"Yes, Mrs. Turner, I do think of this; if I did not," and her eyes flashed, "do

you think that anything would tempt me to go? No, I would starve first; and, Mrs. Turner, it is not that I should mind so much going to live with Lady Sunderland, but Lady Elizabeth will be my mistress, and I never can like her. I shall be shut up in that gloomy house, and,—however, it does not much matter, I shall soon die, like the poor little redbreast I caught and put into a cage.”

“No, my dear, you will not die; people do not so soon die of their own free will; it is God’s will alone that can deprive us of life; and, Linda, pray bear in mind that to die in peace you must be good whilst you are on earth. I love you very much, dear child,” Mrs. Turner continued, as she drew Linda affectionately towards her, “and I rejoice to think what opportunities you will have of improvement; and believe me, that it depends entirely upon

yourself whether your lot will hereafter be a happy or a miserable one. Not that I expect that you will like the present change, but it will all work for your good; remember these words whenever you are inclined to murmur or rebel."

Just as this were spoken the Sunderland carriage drove up, and Linda, pale and trembling, beheld Lady Elizabeth's face at the window.

"If you please, ma'am, Lady Elizabeth Sinclair is at the door; she has called for Miss Linda, and does not wish to get out."

Poor Linda! there was nothing to be done but to obey with as little delay as possible.

Mrs. Turner made ready the passive child, the pale, mute, tearless anguish of whose expression haunted her imagination for many a day.

Lady Elizabeth received her with the stately coldness—one of her systems formed for her general demeanour towards the victim she had caught—a few formal words, unanswered by Linda, the only notice she took of her. They returned at once to Bellemont, and Linda was desired to follow her conductress to the schoolroom, and after traversing long passages and narrow staircases, they arrived at a door, which when opened displayed a most scantily furnished apartment, occupied by a lady, the very counterpart of this forlorn apartment.

“Miss Straightways, I have brought you the pupil, whom I trust you will be able to train into better ways. At present, I fear you will find her most troublesome, ill-behaved and ignorant, but we must hope for the best; and remember, if she

is not amenable to reason, coercion must be used. I shall always be at hand to assist you in every way."

And thus saying, Lady Elizabeth left the room.

## CHAPTER XI.

WE are not going to enlarge upon the events of Linda's schoolroom days. The effects they produced upon her character may easily be imagined from the two sketches we have given of her, now as a child, and then as she was, when she first appeared before our readers, at the age of seventeen. The life of constraint and total want of tenderness had operated upon a nature inherently proud and impetuous, but which at the same time, in the deep recesses of her heart, yet unfathomed, possessed much of nobleness and generosity.

Poor girl! she soon became aware that there was nothing for her but to succumb

to her new life; and with a degree of self-restraint, wonderful in such a peculiar temperament, she seemed to have made up her mind doggedly to endure the hated routine to which she was subjected, and perhaps, *faute de mieux*, applied herself diligently, though without relish, to her studies.

Lady Elizabeth was really delighted and surprised at the wonderful progress she made in every branch of education; but it was part of her system never to unbend or to praise, therefore poor Linda was unrewarded by a word of commendation. Wholly secluded in the dismal rooms allotted to herself and governess, her only recreation the dull daily walk, except, indeed, on Sunday, when on leaving church she was permitted to speak a few words to Mrs. Turner, the poor child's countenance was perceptibly changing from vivacious restlessness to gloomy despondency.

It was a life of vacuum certainly, — no one to love her, who had been so fondly loved, so spoilt, and indulged. Lady Sunderland would fain have expostulated, and did, indeed, once or twice dare to remark :

“Elizabeth, don’t you think Linda studies too hard, she looks so pale and dull? Perhaps if she came a little into the drawing-room, it might be better for her health and spirits.”

“My dear mother, pray allow *me* to judge what is best for Linda ; at present she requires much breaking in ; a year hence we may think about what you propose ; till then, allow me, without interference, to proceed in the endeavours I am making for the child’s improvement, unless, indeed, you would prefer taking the whole charge and responsibility of the business upon yourself.”

Lady Sunderland, thus rebuked, said no



more: all she could do was to pay stealthy visits to the schoolroom, taking with her any little treat of fruit, sweetmeats, and small gifts, calculated to please the childish taste of the prisoner; kind words, kind looks were also bestowed upon her,—more welcome than all, to the famished heart of the poor child, who craved for something more warm and tender than those she received from her two keepers, Lady Elizabeth and Miss Straightways.

And Lady Sunderland also had words of hope to give.

“Soon, Linda,” she would say, “when Lady Elizabeth considers you have made good progress in your studies, you will not be so much confined to the schoolroom; and I really must ask Lord Sunderland to inquire about a pony for you to ride; would you not like one?”

Linda’s pale face brightened into a glow

of pleasure. "Oh, so very much!" she answered; "but I fear that can never be," and she sighed heavily. "Lady Elizabeth would never allow such a thing;" and Linda looked more than ever despondent, remembering the many rides she used to take; such fun it always had been! scampering about on anything she could find, — sometimes donkeys without a saddle—she had even mounted cart-horses, if she could get nothing better—but how kind Farmer Watson used to be, in lending her his nice black pony!

However, time went on, and Linda's sallow countenance at length attracted the attention of even Lord Sunderland, who in general almost forgot her existence, so seldom did she cross his path.

"What is the matter with that little Lawless?" he asked one Sunday after church, having by chance happened to turn his eyes upon her during the service, a

strong light on her face from the opposite window, at that moment, displaying conspicuously her ghastly countenance.

"Nothing is the matter with the child," Lady Elizabeth replied in an affronted tone of voice. — "I am happy to say she is making immense progress in her studies; and really her talent in music almost equals her poor mother's."

"I tell you what, Elizabeth," answered the Earl, "she appears to me to be 'making immense progress' towards the grave. I never saw a more wretched little piece of humanity; and my advice is (unless you wish to get rid of her) that her studies should be wholly suspended for a time. Why, what do you intend her for — a governess?"

"My dear father, you do not understand the state of the case. Linda was wholly ignorant when she first came here, she required coercion."

"No doubt, no doubt ; but then, at any rate, she looked healthy and sprightly, and now, such a woe-begone face I never beheld—it quite startled me in church. My lady has hinted to me something about a pony for her. I shall give orders that one may be instantly procured, and I insist upon the girl riding out for two hours, at least, every day—and until then let her have a holiday. Thomas shall always go with her. I do not want to have the little thing's death laid to my door.—And why does she not run about the house, and come into the drawing-room in the evening, as you and Julia used to do?—though she is so small, I hear she is nearly fourteen."

Lady Elizabeth was highly offended : however, Lord Sunderland, when once he insisted upon anything, was as obstinate as his daughter. So from that day forward

a change was destined to take place in Linda's miserable existence.

Lady Elizabeth, even, was rather alarmed when the state of the case actually dawned upon her. Linda was really in a most delicate state of health, requiring, the doctor said, total rest and change of air.

A delightful plan was formed by kind Lady Sunderland.

Lord Sunderland had a beautiful shooting lodge in the Highlands, and there Linda was to go, accompanied by Mrs. Turner, who readily entered into this charming plan. Miss Straightways, quite as tired as her pupil of the imprisonment at Bellemont, took that opportunity of giving up her situation, and, until Linda's return, no other governess was to take her place.

The manner in which Linda received the intelligence of this arrangement was quite in accordance to her peculiar character.

"Linda," said Lady Sunderland, as she seated herself upon one of the hard chairs in the schoolroom, "I am come to tell you something, which I think you will like to hear."

Linda opened wide her dull eyes — but no expression brightened her countenance. She looked void of sense or feeling, her mind was really in a most morbid state.

"Miss Straightways wishes to quit her present situation, and as Doctor L. considers that you are not very well just now, and require a holiday and change of air, Mrs. Turner" — here a look of something approaching to interest was perceptible in the fixed expression, and Lady Sunderland proceeded,—"Mrs. Turner has been so kind as to say she will accompany you, for perhaps two months, to a lovely place of Lord Sunderland's in the Highlands of Scotland. Shall you like this plan, my dear?"

Not a word was spoken; Linda's face became, if possible, even more than ever livid; there was a perceptible heaving of the chest, and then, before Lady Sunderland could prevent it, the girl had fallen flat upon her face on the ground in a fainting fit. Long were they before the exhausted little creature revived, and when at last she opened her eyes, and could speak, her hand sought that of Lady Sunderland, and then she whispered:

"Was that true, or have I only dreamt it? — I do sometimes fancy, and dream very extraordinary things."

"It is true, dear child, — quite true."

The girl started up, lifting her clasped hands on high, straining her glance upwards, as if entranced, and then she sank again on her pillow, hysterical sobs and tears shaking her fragile frame with frightful violence.

All those who witnessed this scene were

alarmed ; even the hitherto unimpressible Lady Elizabeth was dismayed and terror-stricken.

Was this her work ? conscience began to whisper.

Fortunately at this juncture Mrs. Turner arrived at Bellemont to receive further directions upon the subject of the expedition. She was brought to the sofa on which Linda was lying, and seeing the nervous state of the poor little girl, she begged to be left quite alone with her for a short time.

Linda soon felt the influence of the soothing sensation of being alone with one with whom she was perfectly at her ease, and leaning on her friend's bosom, listened to words almost too full of joy for her to endure in her present exhausted state.

But they were cautiously spoken, — and



their meaning seemed to circulate through every vein with a feeling of rapturous delight, quite affecting to behold in that usually poor, sullen, woe-begone, attenuated child. Mrs. Turner insisted upon undressing and putting Linda into her bed, promising not to leave her ; and making her swallow a little hot wine and water, soon had the satisfaction of seeing the poor girl fall into a sound sleep.

A week after this the journey to Scotland commenced.

## CHAPTER XII.

Nor until they were fairly in the train could Linda believe that it was really true — this fairy-like dream of happiness. As long as she felt herself still in one of the Bellemont carriages, she trembled lest the next moment the horses' heads might be turned towards her hated home.

But, oh! the delight of the escaped captive as she felt herself whirling rapidly far away from her grim tormentors! And when that joy began to calm down in a degree, then commenced the new rapture of wonder at her novel situation, and all that she saw around her.

Everything was novelty to this girl who had never before left the neighbourhood of Bellemont. But Linda's amazement arose to an extent quite indescribable, when at length the mountain scenery burst upon her sight, her life having been spent in an English county which boasted not of even a hill of any magnitude.

The lodge which they were to inhabit had been a favourite resort of Lord and Lady Sunderland's in their earlier days, when their children were all young; for some years it had been deserted by the family, Lord Sinclair only occasionally visiting it for fishing or shooting, for he had spent a great portion of his time on the continent, and was not a keen sportsman at any period of his life. The lodge stood on a platform of heather surrounded by the highest mountains, and we must borrow other words than our own to bring before our readers

the scenery of the Highlands in the most pleasant and graphic manner.

The mountains, in their desolate grandeur, shut the lodge in from all more outward view, showing in fine weather but the play of light and shadow on the many-coloured rocks; the sun sending down its rays with fiery fervour, and in winter only dreary heights slated with snow.

There appeared to be neither egress from, nor approach to the lodge, though a track did lead to it, winding in a zig-zag pass through the mountain chain till it abruptly ceased at this heather-clad opening.

The interior of the lodge was comfortably though plainly furnished, and bore evident signs of having been occupied by ladies. It even boasted of a piano-forte, which, with considerate care, Lady Sunderland had caused to be put in order, although the tuner had to come some fifty miles to under-

take the task; and there was also to be found a great deal of music of one sort or another, although, perhaps, it was not of the newest kind, for where did ever Lord Sinclair go, without leaving behind him such traces of his predominant passion?

It was late in the evening when they arrived, but Linda waited not for the morning; she had already slipped out and begun to climb a hill,—the delicious air, the perfume of the heather, the joy of her heart, giving strength and energy to her whole frame.

“Libertà! Libertà! Libertà!” she shouted loud and clear, as she paused and looked around in rapturous delight.

The next morning, notwithstanding the fatigue of the journey, she was up and out, to the amazement of the old Scotchwoman who acted as housekeeper at the lodge, and who looked with curious amazement at the little dark sprite who flew so eagerly

before her into the open air, and with the agility of a goat was soon to be seen climbing up some steep acclivity.

Far and wide did she roam, and returned not till hungry ; but flushed with enjoyment she at last made her appearance before Mrs. Turner, who was beginning to be disquieted at her long absence.

Linda's life was now one long dream of perfect enjoyment. A little sure-footed pony had been provided for her use, and on it she passed the most part of every day, disdaining the guidance of an old man, the husband of the housekeeper, who had been deputed to be her constant escort. After she had once been shown some of the intricate paths of the mountain passes, and had listened attentively to various descriptions of routes, and of those which it would be safe to avoid, she imperatively forbade the old man to follow her.

Mrs. Turner began to feel that she had taken upon herself an anxious charge. As day by day health and strength began to usurp the place of languor and weakness, so did the indomitable will of Linda increase and display itself. Affectionate and fond as she was of the good lady, she felt in no sort of awe of her, heeding what she had said by way of expostulation and reproof, as little as the murmuring of the mountain breezes ; and poor Mrs. Turner soon found that it was no use trying to curb this self-willed girl, who, now all joy and animation, stopped her mouth with kisses whenever she attempted to lecture or even scold her.

As time went on, more and more independent did the little maiden become, and poor Mrs. Turner spent most anxious hours, always alone, thinking she was indeed doing an act of real penance in having left her cheerful, chatty abode for the total

solitude of those dreadful mountains (the good woman had not a spark of romance in her composition).

Linda was never at home; in rain or sunshine she would sally forth, and the poor lady lived in a state of constant terror for her safety. Filling the pockets of the jacket she wore with a large sandwich, or some cake, seldom or never did Linda return to dinner, and when she did appear she was nearly tired out, and glad to go to bed at the earliest hour, to catch a few hours of sleep before sunrise, when she was always up, and had generally climbed a high hill before breakfast time. But what a change had this wild life wrought upon the wretched-looking girl who had left Belmont the picture of approaching atrophy!

It is not to be supposed that the scanty fare which she took with her, when setting



out on her daily pilgrimage, was the sole meal of which she partook.

No ; Linda had made many friends ; soon there was not a cottage or farm-house within many a mile of Glencairn in which she had not made friends.

She was looked upon as a species of curiosity by these simple folk, and the girl, entering with avidity into the novelty of their ways, delighted in receiving their attentions, too glad of the drink of sweet milk so hospitably offered, the delicious oat-cake and new-laid eggs, her keen appetite rendered so doubly acceptable.

She had nothing to give in return for their hospitality but a song, and having one day unconsciously broken into a ditty whilst sitting resting by the side of a large open fireplace, she was surprised, suddenly raising her eyes, to observe with what attention she was listened to by an old

woman who was seated at the opposite side; her knitting had been dropped, and the dulled eyes of the crone were steadfastly fixed upon her face.

"Do you like hearing me sing?" Linda asked.

"Ay, ay; gang on, gang on; it's like the angels in heaven."

Linda, thus encouraged, began again; and now she tried to sing her best, really flattered. So seldom had she been praised, that even the applause of this withered crone incited her to exertion, and soon the kitchen was filled with more audience. All within had approached to listen to sounds such as they hardly could conceive to be human. And from this time Linda knew with what coin to pay her entertainers. A song was always at their command, and soon her fame spread far and wide in this wild district; well known and welcomed by all was she, though

who or what she was they neither knew nor cared—some fairy sprite, perhaps, they deemed her, with that voice of hers, which could not belong to a wee body like hers, unless she was indeed a spirit.

But the simple folk in these unsophisticated regions seemed at once to distinguish the superiority of the class to which this queer-looking little girl belonged, for she was treated with the utmost respect by all.

Not an eye that rested upon her amongst the people, far and near, but lighted kindly, and was followed by a Gaelic benediction; the best seat in every kitchen was presented to her, the pony was led in state to some shed or stable, a fresh egg was put by for her, and fresh cakes were prepared in hopes of a visit from the little kelpie, who received every attention with a dignified condescension amusing to behold.

It was new and pleasant to her feelings

to be thus considered; her innate pride, which had been so crushed and mortified during her stay at Bellemont, began again to circulate in her veins, and gave certain importance to her demeanour, little in accordance with her petite stature and child-like appearance.

How important Linda felt as she sat in some cotter's abode, dispensing her favours and her songs to its admiring inmates!—far more proud of the sensation she there excited, than in future days when her voice elicited the admiration of more cultivated ears.

## CHAPTER XIII.

POOR Mrs. Turner was really in what is called "a fix." Linda was becoming more and more unmanageable every day.

The mountain breezes seemed to keep her in a constant state of intoxication. Who would have known the joyous, wayward girl, pleasure actually dancing in her bright eyes, to be the Linda of the Bellemont schoolroom? With cheeks now gently tinged with colour, flashing eyes, and dimpled mouth, she seemed to tread the air. When for a short interval within doors, she could not sit still: her movements were ever a dance.

In her mountain rambles, Linda had come in contact with more than one merry-making. And what would Lady Elizabeth's feelings have been had she seen her *protégée*, as she often might be found, mingling with a rude group of Highlanders, and, having divested herself of her riding petticoat, taking from them a regular dancing lesson, cracking her fingers, and with the utmost vigour executing the Highland-fling, with energetic spirit echoing the shouts and whoops of the sturdiest? Her steps redoubled in swiftness and activity as the pipes set up their liveliest drone.

Even Mrs. Turner's hair nearly stood on end when she heard at first from Linda's lips some accounts of her exploits, but latterly the girl had become less communicative. She became afraid, from the horror-stricken looks of her companion, that she must take care. What if she were to

write to Lady Elizabeth, and that her fun should be brought to an awful close?

One day the air was so delicious, at the same time so invigorating and enticing, that Linda had imperceptibly extended her rambles farther and farther, and in a totally different direction to her usual beat; she was little aware, indeed, how far she had wandered.

At length she began to think, "What if I have lost my way and cannot get home?" She had reached a path up the rocky sides of the hill, which based a river's side, and up she went, higher and higher,—the sure-footed pony carrying her in safety up this perilous ascent.

When the summit of the hill was gained, there was another and more secure path to be seen, which led down to a more cultivated scene,—fields of grass and grazing cattle,—and in the midst stood a fine family

mansion, the first object of the kind Linda had yet beheld in Scotland.

The house was surrounded by trees, and not far off flowed the picturesque river.

As she gazed, she beheld a crowd of men assembled on the banks, and soon she discovered that they were drawing the water with nets.

She began to descend from her elevated position down the safer path leading at once to the river.

"I must see what there will be in that net," she thought, as she watched the men spring into a boat, taking an enormous net with them, and a rope attached to it, with a wooden handle, which those on shore grasped; the boat then was pushed off, the men dropping the net as they proceeded, until they again approached the shore, some way from whence they had started. Then some of the crew jumped



on land, and commenced drawing the net towards the shore.

Linda by degrees had approached quite close to the scene of action, too deeply excited to remark, except casually, this large assemblage of men who were standing watching these proceedings. She had, without any scruple, pushed her pony's head between them so as to command the best view, and was quite unconscious that she had become an object of curiosity to two young men, not Highlanders, who, in rough fishing dresses made of coarse tartan, and Glengarry caps, were superintending the trawl, and were wonderingly observing this curious little apparition.

"What animal is this?—neither fish nor fowl—something indigenous to your mountains, I suppose?" remarked one to the other.

"I don't know what it is, or where it came from," was the reply.

At this moment, amidst yells and shouts, the net was hauled on to shore.

Such a load it carried!—such myriads of trout, pike, and char soon gasped upon the shore! Such a sight for Linda! It was indeed to her a miraculous draught of fishes, and in ecstasy she clapped her hands, and at length, not being able to contain herself, slipped off the pony and was standing in the midst, never heeding her little steed, whilst she stooped down to examine the shining, panting multitude of the scaly tribe scattered in such fabulous profusion around.

Linda's dress consisted of a green tartan petticoat and black cloth jacket; her hair was all packed closely in a net, underneath a large brown straw hat. Her costume was not particularly becoming or picturesque, but, nevertheless, a pair of flashing dark eyes looked quickly into

the face of the speaker who accosted her, saying—

“And who are you, little oddity?”

“Who am I?” she said, haughtily; “and pray, who are you?”

A burst of laughter followed the speech; and now Linda’s eyes were curiously scanning the two young men, and, with her quick perception, immediately she perceived they were none of the usual class she had hitherto met in her mountain rambles.

“And English, too,” she thought; “dreadful creatures, and gentlemen; and I do so hate both gentlemen and ladies!” And Linda turned round quickly to look for her pony, anxious to get away as soon as possible.

But where was the shelty?—where, indeed! The little animal, left to itself, unheeded by all, and frightened by the shouts and yells of the gillies, had turned its head

homewards, and after, we suppose, a little deliberation, had finally galloped off.

Linda looked about her at first with a sort of haughty defiance, for the laugh of the young men was ringing most disagreeably in her tenacious ears; but presently a change came over her countenance, and she exclaimed, "Oh, where is my pony?"

"It has certainly disappeared," one of the youths answered, still laughing, "and I suppose we shall see you, too, vanish in another moment," he continued, "for of course you are a brace of fairies."

Linda began to be much discomfited. Turning fiercely towards the youths, she said, "I daresay you know well where it is; you have sent him away, or hidden him. I see you are both mischievous and bad." And she stamped her foot in impatient distress.

One of the gillies stepped forward, and, as well as could be made out by his Gaelic

tongue, said that he had seen the pony gallop off, and had tried to catch the rein, but the shelty was too quick for him.

"Too quick for you, you stupid fellow!" Linda exclaimed, her eyes flashing fire; and then, a look of despair clouding her countenance, she added—

"Then, what am I to do?"

These words were followed by a burst of tears.

The two gentlemen were both very young—one quite a youth, of perhaps nineteen years, fine, handsome, and tall; the other appeared rather older. He now approached the little girl.

We must remind our readers that, although Linda was fourteen, she looked some years younger, so small in stature was the girl, and her face such a diminutive oval.

"Don't be unhappy," he said; "we will take care of you, and send you home."

"But my pony,— what will become of him?" she sobbed.

"Depend upon it, he will take care of himself. But where do you come from?"

"I live at the Lodge of Glencairn, miles and miles off."

"Well, never mind; we'll get you back, if we pack you off on a bee's wing," the other interrupted.

But Linda shrank from him, although she could scarcely keep her eyes off his bright face; and yet she seemed to draw closer to the elder, whose pleasant voice and soothing smile gave her more confidence. The other, she thought, though so handsome, looked so mischievous, and was laughing at her so cruelly.

"You must return home with us," the elder one said, "and then something will be managed about getting you back; but is it not very far off?"

"I suppose it is, for I have been out ever since I don't know when; and Mrs. Turner," she exclaimed, clasping her hands,—“Oh, what will she say?”

“Yes,” said her tormentor, “when the pony arrives without you, she will, of course, think you have been killed, and then what a pretty row there will be!”

Again Linda began to weep. She was now almost exhausted; no food had she tasted, excepting a hasty mouthful at breakfast, and it was now evening. She was completely subdued; and at this moment, what with hunger and agitation—without heeding the ceaseless banter of the handsome youth,—she was glad to lean confidently upon the “kind man,” as she mentally called him, whilst they walked towards the mansion.

And when arrived there, she was too much subdued to look around at the curious old

hall, in which a table was already laid out with a substantial meal, the young laird having despatched a message some time before, to order dinner to be in readiness on their arrival.

Linda without hesitation took off her hat, and, notwithstanding her vexation and anxiety, not only about her pony, but about poor Mrs. Turner, commenced eating with the sharpened appetite of her mountain ride.

"Well done, sprite!" exclaimed the handsome bad one, as she had already christened him; "I see you can eat, at any rate, and do not exist upon the food of fairies. Now, what will you drink—whisky, claret, or Guinness's stout?"

"Bring me some milk," she said, turning to a servant in attendance; and then, casting a glance of disgust on her host, said—



"Do you think I ever drink those nasty things?"

There was something most *piquante* in the little girl's countenance and demeanour, and her airs and graces greatly amused the young man.

Her face was no longer pale, and the flush added brilliancy to her dark eyes. Her manner, off-hand and rude as it was, partook not of vulgarity; on the contrary, it was with the very high-bred air of one privileged to assume it, that she spoke and acted. Having gained strength from an excellent dinner, she began to be anxious to depart, and, turning to the "kind man," she said, "Now, pray see about taking me home."

"You ought to ask me," the other said, "for perhaps you are not aware that

'I am monarch of all I survey.'

"Oh!" she answered, laughing superci-

liously, "then, pray, do you go and do what I say."

"I won't stir till you tell me who you are, and where you come from. I want to hear all about it, you little curiosity!"

"All about it!—how inquisitive you are! Well, I am staying with Mrs. Turner, at Lord Sunderland's Lodge. Oh, poor Mrs. Turner! What will she do if shelly returns without me?" she added pathetically.

"Oh, never mind the old lady; she'll get over it when you return."

"Yes; but if she tells Lady Elizabeth?"

"Oh, you will then be just whipped, and put to bed without your supper. Nothing more, I dare say, will happen."

Linda looked daggers at the young man, who worried her as he would have worried one of his small terriers.

The other now spoke:

"But perhaps you will not mind inform-

ing us the name of the young lady we are so anxious to serve?"

He was really curious to discover the whereabouts of this odd child, and soon saw that it would not do to bully her out of any information.

"My name!—do you really wish to hear my name?" she answered, drawing herself up grandly. "Well, then, I will not mind telling you. My name is Rosalinda Lawless."

"Rosalinda what?" inquired emphatically the younger man.

"Lawless, I said," was the impatient answer.

"Rosalinda Lawless!" the young man murmured, musingly. "Who the deuce can she be?" But in another moment he had started from his seat, and asked—

"Was your father's name Valentine?"

"Ah, *povero Padre!*" the girl ejaculated, in a softened manner; "yes, his name was Valentine."

The youth approached Linda, and, in a mock-heroic manner, knelt on one knee before her, opening wide his arms, and saying —

“And I am Norman Lawless, your own cousin ! The blood of kindred bubbles in my heart at this discovery. Come to my arms, fair relative, and let me press upon thy lips a kiss of cousinly regard !”

Little did the young man calculate upon the effect of this speech, and the proposal it contained. Indeed, he had rather been preparing himself for a hearty box on the ear from this dark fairy, who had hitherto looked so wrathfully and suspiciously upon him.

But Linda, in amazement, first gazed bewildered upon the youth as there he knelt, malicious fun sparkling in his blue eyes, looking so bright and beautiful.

The girl could discover nought in his

countenance, as it thus beamed upon her, but beauty and kindness; and into the chilled, void heart of the orphan girl a gush of warm, kindling love had rushed tumultuously.

He her cousin, that handsome youth! and he, too, of her own blood—*really* belonging to her! And in another moment she had rushed vehemently into the outspread arms, throwing hers round the neck of the now surprised though highly amused Norman Lawless, imprinting on his cheeks fond kisses.

“Holloa, cousin, this is more than I bargained for,” he said, trying to extricate himself from her grasp; “but I am, nevertheless, mightily obliged to you for this warm reception, and very glad to become acquainted with my small cousin with the long name.”

“Are you really glad?” Linda gasped, her eyes filling with tears; and then she added, in a voice so musical and plaintive

that even Norman felt slightly touched, as well as amused, "But you, I dare say, have never known what it is to have felt so lonely and miserable as I have been for so long; no one to care for me since I lost my *povera Zia*."

"Well, never mind; cheer up, my little woman," the youth replied: "I'll take care of you, at any rate, this evening. I will send old Mrs. M'Carthy, the housekeeper, to look after you whilst we go and bring the dog-cart round to the door, to take you back to old Turner. So cheer up, I tell you; come along, Asheton!"

And, patting her head as if she were a little child or a little dog, he departed, followed by his friend.

## CHAPTER XIV.

LINDA soon found herself in the dog-cart, seated by the side of her cousin and his friend, and a guide (necessary to direct them to their remote destination) in the seat behind.

So proud and happy she had never before felt ; one near her to whom she could really claim affinity ; no longer a little solitary being, standing alone in this large, cold, disagreeable world.

How she talked to her companion, who listened with wonderful interest to all she said, feeling a boy-like gratification and importance in hearing her rapturous ex-

pressions of delight at his presence, particularly when he was informed that she was not quite such a baby as he had imagined her to be.

Linda, in the effervescence of her joy, did not scruple to tell him all her thoughts,—how cruel and tormenting she had at first considered him,—and now, how kind and beautiful she thought he was! And to all this Norman smiled approvingly.

Flattery has a charm, from whatever source it may spring; and although quite aware that he certainly was a very handsome youth, yet it was pleasant to be told so, even by the lips of a child. At the age of nineteen he was indeed no mean sight to gaze upon:—

“The belted plaid and tartan hose  
Did ne’er more graceful limbs disclose;  
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,  
Curled closely round his bonnet blue.”



And at this period, before fierce passion had assumed therein its empire,

“A blither heart  
Did never love nor sorrow tame.”

But alas! alas! for the sunny days of youth and innocence!

Linda told all her story—how she had happily lived with the *povera Zia*, and then her wretched life at Bellemont; Lady Elizabeth's tyranny; her illness; and, finally, poor Mrs. Turner's kindness in accompanying her to Glencairn. Yes, poor, dear, kind Mrs. Turner;—and here, as before, Linda's heart sank.

But again Norman encouraged her, and oh! how comforting were his words.

Such a beautiful night, too, it was,—the moon, in its fullest brilliancy, lighting up the splendid scenery on every side. Linda had never witnessed anything like

such a scene as this before, and was in a rapture of delight.

"Oh, this *is* Heaven!" she cried, "if it could only last. But, Norman, you will come again to see me?" she anxiously asked. "Your own little cousin—you will never now desert her, will you?"

Words these were, spoken without thought; but oh! how prophetic—how ominous of the future!

"Why, as to coming all this long way to see you, little woman, I fear that will be impossible. I go from Lough Rea Castle the day after to-morrow, to Oxford, my first term there. But I will not forget you, small coz. I will tell my father about you (your uncle, Lord Curraghmore, I suppose you know), and I shall try to soften my mother's heart in your favour; but, to tell you the truth, hers is rather a hardish concern, except towards me, and I

must say I have found her the kindest and most indulgent of mothers. Yes; you may depend upon it, Rosalinda (what a grand mouthful of a name!), that we shall meet again sometime or other: and in the meantime I promise not to forget you. So cheer up, little one."

Linda's tears had begun to flow, and Norman Lawless really felt sorry. The bad seed indigenous to corrupt nature, fostered by a bringing up of injudicious indulgence, had not yet sprung up and choked any good there might be in his heart. There were softer feelings in it at this time, which the influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil had not deadened. His naturally strong passions had not yet flashed forth with all their future intensity. He was at this moment on the brink of manhood, not having quite lost some of the better, more innocent feelings

of boyhood. Norman's sympathies were more touched than they had ever been before, by the demeanour of this newly-found relative.

There was, indeed, something wonderfully quaint and uncommon about this extraordinary girl, so like a child in appearance, but so *éveillée* in all her feelings,—so different from any other girl with whom he had ever come in contact. He thought of his two sisters, large-boned, red-haired young ladies, brought up in the strictest manner, without a word to say for themselves — how different from this child of nature! — and he began to remember all about her: the argument he recollected hearing between his father and mother some years ago, about some cousin who was left alone in the world; how his father advocated the idea of taking charge of her, and allowing her to be educated with his sisters, saying

he really thought poor Valentine's, his only brother's child ought not to be neglected by her natural relations ; and he now thought with shame of his mother's coarse, unfeeling speeches, and utter refusal to admit her under her roof.

How it had all ended he had quite forgotten and never inquired, taking no interest whatever in the matter, and being well accustomed to fracas between his parents, on which occasions his mother always came off victorious.

What a curious coincidence, that he should have thus met in this out-of-the-way place, this small bone of contention, and that she should be such a curiously taking little thing !

The young man declared within his heart that he would always befriend her. He little calculated how soon, in the vortex of pleasure and dissipation into which he

speedily was plunged, the vividness of his desire to befriend poor Linda would decrease, although, in the years of absence which elapsed before he again saw her, the remembrance of this night's drive, and the strange-looking companion at his side, her eyes flashing upon him in the moonlight, and the deliciously-toned young voice which, either in speaking or song, rang in his ear, was never entirely forgotten, but recurred now and then to his memory, always with a pleasurable sensation.

During the long *trajet* to the mountain Lodge, Linda, in the effervescence of her delight, had broken out into many a snatched song. She had addressed the glorious moon, as it sailed above, revealing so many splendid points in the scenery through which they passed, with a burst of melody, and the beautiful air, "Vaga Luna," was executed in a manner which astonished and delighted

the young men, and brought to Norman Lawless's recollection the half-forgotten but tragic story of his uncle Valentine having married an opera singer, and their early deaths. But this circumstance only enhanced the interest with which he listened to her daughter's beautiful voice; and Linda most willingly was made to "sing on" whenever she came to the end of a song. But now her heart began to sink; she was nearing her home. Soon, oh soon, all this happiness would be over, and he would be gone!

"Norman, you will come in for a little while; I cannot part with you yet," she cried, as the carriage wound round a path in the mountain which she knew would bring them at once to the Lodge; "and you must make my peace with Mrs. Turner. She will be so angry, and I shall have such a scolding."

"Oh, yes; I'll humbug the old girl," he

cried; "never fear, little singing bird. Why, Rosalinda, your voice is the most beautiful I ever heard."

"Do you think so, Norman? How glad I am! Shall I not practise hard to make it still better for you when we meet again? But, oh! when will that be?"

They were now before the door of the Lodge, and there stood the unfortunate Mrs. Turner, who, having heard for some time through the clear air the sound of wheels, was waiting in a state of breathless agony for the result.

Messengers had been despatched in every direction, for the pony had duly returned, bearing on its back only the empty saddle. Her terror had been so extreme, that now, when she saw the living form of her troublesome charge safely lifted out of the dog-cart, the reaction was too great; the poor woman had nearly fainted, and when revived she



was too rejoiced even to find fault with Linda, who was overwhelming her with caresses and excuses.

"And, pray, who are these gentlemen to whom I am indebted for your return?" Mrs. Turner at length said.

"This gentleman," Linda replied, drawing herself up proudly, "is Mr. Norman Lawless, my cousin, Mrs. Turner."

"Bless my soul! how strange!" was the good woman's reply; and then the necessary explanations followed.

The young men were easily persuaded to stay supper. Already they found a blazing fire, and the table laid for the evening meal; for Mrs. Turner, hoping and expecting the return of Linda—allowing herself to be persuaded that she had only remained at some farm-house or cottage, and that the pony, impatient of delay, had contrived to get away—had calculated upon the ravenous state

of appetite the girl would bring with her, and prepared accordingly; so, with some hasty additions, a good supper soon made its appearance. In the meanwhile, her terror having evaporated, she began to look upon her charge with a less indulgent air.

"Miss Linda," she now said, "pray go and take off your riding-dress, and make yourself more like a young lady. I fear your cousin and this gentleman must have formed a very extraordinary opinion of you in every way."

And Linda, looking rather ashamed, immediately left the room, returning half an hour after, certainly looking a very different creature.

Her hair was neatly smoothed, and she wore a plain, well-fitting white dress (Lady Elizabeth allowed no ornaments of bows or ribbons)—her cheeks were still flushed by

the air and excitement of the day, and as she now again appeared, subdued, and quietly gliding into the room, demurely seating herself by the side of Mrs. Turner, her former companions would not have recognised her as the little sprite of the morning's adventure.

Yes; there she sat, her eyes fixed immovably upon young Lawless, as if she was engraving on her memory his every feature, and every expression of his countenance; the "kind man," as she had at first named him, forgotten, unheeded — her whole soul wrapped up in the delight of this new possession of a cousin.

When they sat down to supper, she placed herself next to Norman Lawless, and occupied herself entirely in attending to his wants. How she pressed upon him the eatables and drinkables, scarcely touching any food herself. The young man was

evidently amused, and rather flattered, by the devotion thus shown to him, and, perceiving how it pleased her being thus employed, with a degree of forbearance unlike his usual manner, he did not repulse her exigent attentions.

Mrs. Turner looked on, wonder-struck. This cousin of to-day seemed in a few short hours to have changed the whole character of this impassible girl; she who had never evinced any very warm affection towards any one — certainly not since her old aunt had died—and now her very expression was altered, tenderness beaming from her generally either fierce or sullen eyes.

But the good, calm-minded woman little knew what a strong current of affection was really pent up in the heart of Linda Lawless. The parting came at last. Lawless began to dread the scene so certain to ensue from the increasing excitement of the little girl.

"Asheton," he whispered, "go and see if the dog-cart is ready."

But Linda's quick ears had heard the order.

"Not yet," she implored; "just one half-hour more."

However, Asheton heeded her not. It was already nearly midnight, and a three hours' drive back was before them. At an early hour the next morning they were to meet the train, to start for England.

Linda's face grew paler and paler; and nearer and nearer she crept to Norman's side, who was rattling on, pretending not to observe her increasing emotion.

He began to wish himself well out of the parting scene, which he saw was about to ensue; for, though the youth had been surprisingly attracted towards his little newly-discovered relative, yet it was not in his temperament to imagine how such

ardent affection as that evinced by Linda could have been engendered in so short an acquaintance.

And it was, indeed, astonishing to witness. But we must remember that in her veins flowed the blood of two natures famed for their impetuous impulses.

Enthusiastic beings had been both the poor Rosalinda and her husband, the impassioned, the uncontrollably vehement Valentine Lawless.

And when we consider the position of this their child, with her inheritance of the self-same feelings imprisoned, restrained within her heart, panting for freedom, for affection, feeling herself isolated in the midst of those who she thought did not love her, who only nurtured her for the cold sake of charity (thus in her distorted fancy she deemed it), we may think it less strange that—suddenly finding, in so peculiar and

romantic a manner, a youth so gifted in person, with good looks such as she had never seen before; with manners which, though at first she thought them teasing, were so attractive in their sportive fun; and then hearing he was so near of kin to her, the desolate one, next to being her own brother—the idea should be so enchanting, so delicious; and that to the delight of this new feeling, the impetuous nature of Linda should succumb at once.

Then, when at length Mr. Asheton returned to announce that all was ready for departure, Linda's tears and sobs broke forth. In her own liquid language, to which she ever resorted in great sorrow, or great joy, she piteously bewailed herself; and at length Norman Lawless, sorry, but yet most anxious to get away—for he thought this excess of cousinly love rather too much of a good thing,—in short, a bore — was obliged

*this time* (on a future day it was not thus kindly that he shook her off) gently to extricate himself from her tenacious grasp, and, affectionately kissing the little girl, to make a hasty retreat; on seeing which, Linda, uttering a cry of anguish, exclaimed, "*Ah! misera me! e partito!*" and threw herself despairingly on the ground.



## CHAPTER XV.

It was a considerable relief to Mrs. Turner to remember that only ten more days remained before she and her charge were to return to Bellemont.

She had a troublesome time with Linda for a few days after this adventure; and the pony being unfortunately lamed after its flight from Lough Rea, the girl was forced to forego her rides.

However, after a day or two of hanging about, listless and unhappy, her only occupation and solace was music, which she had hitherto wholly neglected since she came to the Lodge. She was indefatigably taken up

with it, and never tired of singing, and Mrs. Turner was thankful for anything, which filled up the time of the long, weary days; for now the rain, which since their arrival had been most obliging in keeping away, poured down with unceasing violence.

A few days before they went, however, it cleared up, and the pony was pronounced sound; but Linda seemed to have lost the zest which she had before so vividly taken in her mountain rambles, and, to Mrs. Turner's surprise, evinced no longer repugnance to returning to England. A short time before, the very idea had been torture to the girl.

Linda's meeting with her cousin had changed the whole current of her nature; on him was centred every feeling, every anticipation of the future. With her ideal of the future so vividly engraven on her enthusiastic heart, she bore about with her a

treasure which would make everything else bearable.

“It was because I had nothing in the world to love, that I was so lonely and miserable,” she thought, as she contemplated the future; “and he told me that we should meet again,—that he would talk to his father and mother about me—‘my uncle,’ as he said. It is quite a different thing now to what it has been; he will be in England, at any rate; Oxford is not so very many miles from Bellemont, after all. But I shall always love the name of dear Scotland, where, for the first time in my life, I may say, I have really, although for so short a time, been, oh! so very, very happy.”

Poor Linda! Oxford might be indeed only a hundred miles from Bellemont; but it is not always distance which so often places a gulf between two persons, but a barrier

still more impassable — that iceberg called forgetfulness.

\* \* \* \* \*

Linda was again delivered into the hands of Lady Elizabeth, very different from the sullen, ghastly-looking girl who had left her very little more than two months ago. Health beamed from her countenance, and the eyes were not, as before, always cast down. She looked fearlessly around her, and shrank not with trembling from the pale, stern face of her whose injudicious system and training, without real intent to harm, had produced so blighting an effect upon her *protégée*.

“Why should she fear her?” Norman advised her not to care, and he had said “it would soon be over, and not be long before she would be a woman.” She must remember these words; and now she was no longer a poor little wretched nobody,

but Norman's cousin, Lord Curraghmore's niece; and really it was wonderful what importance these ideas gave to the little girl's demeanour.

We cannot affirm what effect this change produced at first upon Lady Elizabeth; but Lady Sunderland was much pleased, and Lord Sunderland exclaimed, "Well, little one, I am glad to think we shall not have to bury you just yet. You must keep up those good looks of yours, and to-morrow you shall see the pony I have bought for you."

And now Linda had courage to look up and thank his Lordship very gratefully.

Many changes awaited Linda. Miss Straightways had been replaced by a French governess—though no younger, yet less lugubrious in appearance than her former instructress. In future, instead of the school-room dinner, Linda and Made-

moiselle were to partake of that meal at the luncheon-table, and were always to appear in the evening.

Lord and Lady Sunderland had with some difficulty accomplished these plans, Lady Elizabeth having strongly opposed them, and threatened entirely to give up any share in the superintendence of Linda's education; but knowing what an amusement and occupation it afforded to the poor invalid, they did not like to express what they really thought,—that it would be the best thing she could possibly do.

At this juncture Lord Sinclair fortunately returned from a lengthened Continental tour, and his influence with his sister prevailed, and she gave way, although with great disapprobation, to the less stringent arrangements and the partial emancipation of the former captive; and as she noted the altered expression of the

child's countenance, she thought it was indeed most passing strange, and would require her strictest *surveillance*. Lord Sinclair, during the short visit, had scarcely seen Linda, but for the sake of her mother he was anxious for her well-doing.

Mrs. Turner, who, in fact, stood as much in awe of Lady Elizabeth as the rest of the world, was very guarded in all she narrated of the mountain sojourn. She dared not confess how completely she had succumbed to the wayward fancies of her charge, or how totally powerless she had been to restrain her within proper bounds of decorum.

Even the story of Linda's meeting with her cousin was glossed over as slightly as possible. What would that straight-laced lady have thought if she had heard that the girl she was striving to bring up under the most severe rule of discipline, had been

brought home at ten o'clock at night by two young men, found by them alone, mingling amongst a set of wild fishermen and gillies, by a river's side, miles and miles from home? No; certainly, the less said upon the subject the better; and she even gave a hint to Linda, saying, "I fear, my dear, Lady Elizabeth would be very angry if she heard of the manner in which you encountered your cousin."

Linda tossed her head, as much as to say, "Who cares?" but she replied —

"I don't think there is much fear of her ever hearing; I am sure I shall never tell her."

"Well, I advise you to be silent about it; for really, Linda, when I consider how blamable I was to allow you to roam about by yourself as I did, I——"

But Linda stopped her from continuing a



speech the good lady had made so often, by saying —

“No one could be to blame but myself, dear Mrs. Turner. How could you have kept me quiet? You might just as well have tried to catch one of the moonbeams which slanted across those dear mountains. You allowed me to be the happiest of the happy, and what harm has come of it, pray?”

“Well, well, I trust none, and that I may never be blamed,” the good woman said.

Certainly we must add, that she gave a sigh of relief when she found herself once more in her snug, cottage with her maid and her cat? What to her had been that magnificent scenery around. She quite shuddered when she thought of those grim mountains and dark rocks.

## CHAPTER XVI.

TIME went on, in many respects, more smoothly with Linda for the next two years and a half.

The new governess was a clever, shrewd woman, of a certain age, who soon understood the character of all those she had to deal with, and with true worldly wisdom acted accordingly.

The situation was a good one in every respect; she received an ample salary, and all the creature comforts were abundant. Mademoiselle Dubois had worked hard all her life, and it was, even to her French nature, an agreeable change to be

able to rest herself for a while, although it was a life of little pleasure or excitement that she led while at Bellemont.

Linda was quick and clever at everything she learnt; the studies gave her very little trouble; and as for her music, it was a veritable delight to the Frenchwoman, and soon she felt how little she could do to improve a pupil who seemed to have been born with music at her fingers' ends. However, she told not this to Lady Elizabeth, but made her believe that to her own constant labour her pupil owed such great improvement in that branch of her education; and as Mademoiselle Dubois was perfect in the art of humbug, she managed, by adroit flattery, and constantly expatiating upon the very surprising powers of mind, and the acute perception, in all matters, possessed by her talented Ladyship, to acquire her complete confidence and approval.

Lady Elizabeth concluding, however, that

no foreigner could possess proper enlightenment upon religious matters, notwithstanding that Mademoiselle Dubois professed herself (for the time being, at least) a Protestant, took into her own hands all theological instructions.

This was Linda's greatest trial ; for, we grieve to say, the hard, dry studies, and the harder opinions of the instructress, did not expand the heart of Linda, nor elevate her feelings of devotion or of love.

Indeed, we can scarcely be surprised at the deadness of the poor girl's feelings at this period of her existence, as to vital religion. It was taught to her as a science, by one who had rendered herself an object of dislike to the girl, and whose cold, grey eyes lighted not up into any expression of feeling, as she discoursed of things which should have infused hope and joy into the heart of the listener.

So time went on ; and Linda would have been, comparatively speaking at least, contented thus to pass the time which intervened, before she had grown into a woman, — that period which, by some miraculous means, was to create such a marvellous change in her circumstances,—had it not been for the continual feeling of hope deferred always gnawing at her heart.

She had become accustomed to many things which at first irritated the girl to an insupportable degree. She had learnt to care little for Lady Elizabeth's opinions ; to meet her cold looks of reprehension with perfect indifference ; to sit mute and motionless whilst a lecture was being delivered, her thoughts far away—in the Highlands generally—all the time, beginning always by steeling her mind by remembering Norman's words and injunctions, that she ought not to allow herself to be made unhappy by

Lady Elizabeth,—that she would soon be a woman, and then —— The train of thought carried her so far out of her present state, that her countenance, at first dull and inexpressive, began to light up, her eyes to sparkle, nay, sometimes even her lips to smile ; and many times Lady Elizabeth, in horrified dismay, had stopped short in the midst of a most dignified harangue by exclaiming,—

“ Linda, pray are you listening to what I am saying ? ”

And the electric shock of her voice had recalled the girl, with a start of affright, from the fairy land in which her senses were revelling. Ah ! this hope, this hope, which never left her mind. It went on, always green and unfading ; and when months and even years went by, still it was there, nourished and fostered with never-ceasing care.

“ When I am a woman it will be all

right," she would think, "and then I shall certainly see him." And every birthday was hailed with inexpressible delight.

A newspaper was never allowed to be read by Linda, or perchance some information might have been gained concerning the subject of her thoughts. She might have seen that, about a year after she had met him, Norman was gazetted into the Foot Guards, and then that the said Honourable Norman Lawless had obtained a lengthened leave of absence for the purpose of travelling.

Linda could have been really fond of Lady Sunderland, for that lady would fain have been so kind and indulgent to the girl; but Lady Elizabeth's vigilant eye was always on the watch to counteract her mother's "weak conduct," as she termed it, towards a child who really required the strictest management.

Lord Sunderland was also inclined to notice the little girl when he saw her in the evening; but then, with Lady Elizabeth's eye continually resting upon her, she felt unable to respond to his few kind words, or perhaps some joking allusion to her pony, or some such trifle. But occasionally he would meet her in her morning rides, and the good-natured Lord would join the little girl, who, with eyes brightened and cheeks flushed by the exercise, looked quite a different creature, and who would then chat with him quite naturally, removed from the atmosphere of Lady Elizabeth's presence, which froze her into sullen stolidity. "Poor little thing!" he would say to Lady Sunderland; "I see they are educating her to death; and what is it all for, I want to know? I suppose the Curraghmores do not intend their niece to be a governess?"



"Yes," Lady Sunderland replied, "they certainly are overdoing it; but, really, Elizabeth is so determined in her notions, that I have no power in the matter."

And so it went on, Linda with no relaxation but her daily ride. Even Mrs. Turner had left Bellemont to live with a sister in a distant county. Sometimes she would steal out of the school-room when Mademoiselle Dubois was so immersed in the interest of one of her books, that she heeded not her pupil, and pay stealthy visits to the housekeeper, Mrs. Davis, a kind old body, who in her heart sincerely pitied the poor child shut up all day in the gloomy room, with books never out of her hand. She had always a little tit-bit for her in the shape of some preserve, or some such good thing. And, oh! it was a relief to the wearied girl to be able to talk at her

ease with the good woman, to tell her all her grievances, to relate over and over again the history of that one bright spot in her existence, her Highland visit, and even, *faute de mieux*, confide to her the adventure of meeting her cousin.

And what a delight it was to hear from Mrs. Davis that, now that she heard the name of Curraghmore mentioned, she knew all about that family—at least had heard plenty about them; and although the intelligence she had to give was not particularly pleasing, anything of her relations was interesting.

The housekeeper enlarged upon the disagreeable qualities of Lady Curraghmore, whom she made out to be proud as Lucifer, an overbearing mistress to her servants, a skinflint, and a regular vixen towards my Lord and the young ladies.

"As for the son,—Mrs. Saunders, the housekeeper, a particular friend of mine," Mrs. Davis would add, "who lived with the family for a year or two,—she could not stand it any longer,—said he was the only one who knew the length of my Lady's thumbs; he had it all his own way with her; and a handsome lad he was, I believe, but with a rare spirit of his own."

"So much the better," interrupted Linda, much excited; "what a poor creature a man would be without a spirit! But go on, Mrs. Davis."

"Oh, I've not much more to say. The young gentleman ruled the roast, it seemed: such rows he kicked up—ordered about as if he were already more the master in the house than my Lord,—even my Lady was meek as a mouse before him. Mrs. Saunders told me many a good story about those people, but I have forgotten them all

by this time. The whole concern would have been clean out of my head had you not brought them back by your talk of having met the youngster; and, to be sure, he to be your cousin, Miss Linda! Well, I might have remembered that both your names were Lawless, although Mrs. Saunders seldom called him anything but Mr. Norman."

"And my uncle—what did she say of him?" asked Linda, eagerly.

Mrs. Davis chuckled knowingly.

"Oh! Miss Linda, he—— Let me see, what did she say? Oh! that he played second fiddle to my Lady, but did not much care for that, I believe. He was a very handsome gentleman, had gay Irish blood in his veins, and understood how to amuse himself very well, independent quite of home. However, this is all foolish talk for you to hear, young lady; so we'll change the subject, if you please."

And this sort of conversations and stolen visits to the housekeeper's room was Linda's chief recreation at this period of her existence at Bellemont.

## CHAPTER XVII.

LORD SINCLAIR, who had been abroad some time, now returned to Bellemont.

Linda had taken up her abode there before his departure, but he had scarcely seen her. It was the days of Miss Straightways and total incarceration; and although he felt most anxious that the child of his ever-lamented friend, Rosalinda, should be well cared for, the girl herself, when he saw her so sullen-looking and unimpressible, had not particularly interested his fancy.

The first night of his return Lady Elizabeth issued her command that Mademoiselle

Dubois and her pupil's presence would be dispensed with in the drawing-room that evening.

The next day Linda was taking her usual ride; the air was bright and clear, exhilarating the spirits of the girl, who never felt so gay and light of heart as when on her beautiful pony.

The old groom had a hard matter to keep up with his reckless charge, who oftentimes led him a pretty dance,—taking roads, and getting through and over places, difficult for him, so differently mounted, to follow. Nothing Linda enjoyed more than terrifying the old man out of his wits by some mad freak—leaping over impediments which he considered dangerous in the extreme, or some such escapade. She was the most fearless of riders, and, to judge by the manner in which she managed her pony, a most skilful one also. Thomas very often

grumbled and scolded, threatened to tell Lady Elizabeth, and all sorts of things. But Linda knew that he would not; that, though he was sometimes so cross, he was in reality a kind old man, and, moreover, that he was rather proud of her feats, and of her riding, having been, as he thought, her sole instructor—never remembering, or perhaps knowing, that whilst with her old aunt she had mounted every animal in the village, with or without a saddle.

The groom, like all the inhabitants of Bellemont, pitied the little girl who was kept in such *durance vile* within the house: not a relaxation afforded her, save this one of her daily ride,—so he gave way, and let her do what she pleased, so that she would promise not to break her neck.

This day she seemed more wild than usual, and, instead of taking the regular way which led to the high road, insisted



upon having a gallop in fields which, either by stiles or hedges, or by locked gates, were rendered almost inaccessible to horses.

"We'll get over them somehow or another," she said; "come on, Thomas!"

And truly they did manage to scramble over all but the last enclosure, which led at once to the road. This was a very difficult one even to leap, a ditch and hedge intervening.

"Now, Miss Linda, how in the name of wonder are we to get over here?" said Thomas, very irate. "I won't stand all this here much longer; I must just tell Lady Elizabeth; it's regular shocking. Just look at your habit, Miss; it is torn to ribbons. If that won't tell a tale, I don't know what will; and as for this here fence, you'll break your neck: and the pony's, if you attempt it."

"Well, then, Thomas, neck or nothing!"

Linda cried, as, having gathered up her reins accordingly, she, after patting the pony's neck and speaking a few encouraging words to him, deliberately cleared a tremendous leap—one, indeed, which a notorious fox-hunter might have gloried in—leaving poor Thomas to follow as he might.

At the moment when she had gained *terra firma*, and with a ringing laugh of triumph was looking back at the terrified old man, she perceived two horsemen who had approached close to her, not before noticed in her excitement. She started, colouring deeply when she discovered that one was Lord Sunderland, and the other his son.

"Well done, Linda!" Lord Sunderland said, laughing; "I did not know what a female Nimrod you were. Why," he continued, examining the point from whence

she had issued, and seeing Thomas endeavouring to lead the horse over it, "this is an extraordinary feat to be performed by a little girl and her pony. Is it not, Sinclair?"

Lord Sinclair now approached. "Linda has forgotten me," he said, as he held out his hand in kindly greeting; "I am sure I should not have known her."

And the girl did look changed at this moment. She was not at all like the usual Linda of the Bellemont drawing-room,—a pale, abstracted, sullen-looking little creature, never raising her eyes from her work, for fear of encountering those of Lady Elizabeth,—but a rosy, bright girl, so proud of herself and delighted, her mouth dimpled with laughter, showing a row of very pretty little teeth. She was too much exhilarated by her feat to think of anything else—her torn habit or her unladylike exploit; but sat watching the

operation of dragging Thomas's horse over the fence, in which he was now assisted by Lord Sunderland's groom, with the most unrestrained amusement. And what would Lady Elizabeth have said, had she heard this tutored pupil exclaim to the old groom, when at last the business was accomplished, in a most hail-fellow-well-met style: "Well, Thomas, my neck is safe, and so is the pony's, and you certainly have taken good care of yours. I should have been ashamed of such a cowardly act, getting off and leading your horse over, when I never hesitated to leap the fence."

The gentlemen were much amused, and they all rode on together, Linda chatting incessantly, boasting of all her wonderful deeds of horsemanship, giving long details of many adventures which, had they been repeated, would have put a final stop to any more riding for the future. So ex-

hilarated was she, that everything but the present moment was forgotten, till suddenly they came in sight of the mansion, and then a revulsion took place in her feeling, and she suddenly, in a voice of despair, exclaimed, "Oh! what will Lady Elizabeth say?"

And she looked down on her torn habit with such an expression of agony in her face, that Lord Sinclair almost started. That look!—how much it reminded him of her mother in one of her tragic parts!

"Never mind; you shall have a new one," Lord Sunderland said good-naturedly.

"Oh, but that will be of no use: Lady Elizabeth will be so shocked. And, Lord Sunderland and Lord Sinclair," she continued, beseechingly turning from one to the other, her bright eyes now dimmed by tears, "pray don't tell her what you saw me do; she would think it so unladylike,—so dread-

ful; pray say nothing about it, and when I ever ride again, I will try not to leap the fences, although, when I am at full gallop, I don't know how it is, but I feel as if I could do anything, however wrong and rash."

Both the gentlemen promised secrecy, and Lord Sinclair declared that he would ride at once to D——, and she should have a new skirt by to-morrow."

"And look, Linda," said Lord Sunderland, pointing to the carriage that they now perceived driving in another direction, "there goes Lady Elizabeth. I heard her tell my lady that she was going with her this afternoon to pay some visits."

Linda was indeed relieved. How grateful she felt towards those two good-natured Lords, who were most anxious to help her to deceive Lady Elizabeth!

"This is a very wrong system, Sinclair," said Lord Sunderland, as he continued his

ride with his son, on the habit-skirt expedition to the neighbouring town. "I don't like it at all. Elizabeth, though meaning so well, is doing her best to ruin that girl. Her severity will make her deceitful, and destroy all the good that may be within her. What a nice plucky little creature she is! Really, on her pony, no one could know her to be the girl one sees sitting in the drawing-room, like an automaton, by the side of that French Mademoiselle."

"Why does Elizabeth think it necessary to break the poor child in, in that absurd manner?" replied Lord Sinclair. "To me she is most interesting, and I see in her a strong likeness to poor Rosalinda."

"Well, when she is animated, I think she has a look of her mother; but I really believe she will be handsomer when she is older and happier. The Curraghmores are

a good-looking race. Rosalinda, after all, had no great beauty to boast of."

"No; but what an expressive, delicious countenance it was! All the years that have elapsed since I saw her have never effaced the impression she made upon my mind. Yes, she was the love of my boyhood; and I can assure you the feeling was a very strong one—never yet surpassed by any other feeling of the kind. Yes," he added, sorrowfully,—

" 'Had I but loved with a boyish love,  
It would have been better for me;'

"for perhaps you will think it strange," he added, with a regretful smile, "when I tell you that her image, dear soul, has always come between any other woman whom I ought perhaps to have fancied sufficiently to have wished to make my wife. Now, this poor child—I feel towards her as if she



were my own daughter; and, really, Elizabeth is foolish, to use the mildest term; her method of bringing her up quite exasperates me."

"I quite agree with you," Lord Sunderland responded, "but there is no help for it now, I suppose. In a year or two this education mania must in the course of nature subside; but your sister has ever held such supreme sway over us all, that neither your mother nor I dare do much. Something we have accomplished; these rides, for instance. What a brave little creature she is! That was a marvellous leap she took; but those mad-cap freaks must not be allowed. She will come to mischief some of these days, assuredly."

Certainly, that evening it was almost with a start of surprise that Lord Sinclair again beheld the daughter of the brilliant Rosalinda—such a contrast, indeed, to the ever-

animated *cantatrice*, and to the merry, fearless Ariel of the morning, fun and frolic dancing in her bright eyes.

There she sat as usual, working at a table apart by the governess, pale and dull, a very uninteresting specimen of a girl of sixteen, looking by some years younger than she was. But Lord Sinclair determined, if possible, to break the ice of this unnatural state of things. He drew a chair towards the table, and began at once to converse with the two thus isolated from the rest of the party,—Lady Elizabeth looking on dismayed and offended by this flagrant breach of her rules, but not daring to interfere with her brother, who was the only one in the family bold enough to attempt to circumvent her preposterous fancies.

By degrees she saw Linda's countenance brighten, her eyes soon raised from her work, and smiles beginning to dimple her

mouth. Mademoiselle Dubois also seemed to enter into and enjoy what Lord Sinclair was saying.

She perceived he was asking some question, or making some request, at which Linda shook her head, and looked furtively at herself. Then the same question was evidently asked of Mademoiselle Dubois, who also shook her head, and glanced towards her autocrat; after which she observed that her brother had risen, and was approaching to where she sat, his countenance indicating decision.

"Elizabeth," he said, "I have asked Linda for some music, but she says she cannot give me any without your permission; so, pray, accord it, for I am already starving for want of it, not having heard a note for at least a week."

"Linda never plays in public," was the tart rejoinder.

"Then it is high time she should, if you call this public," he answered; "so, pray, be quick and accord your gracious consent, or I fear I shall be inclined to be rebellious."

Not without further demur, and with the very worst grace, Lady Elizabeth, seeing plainly that she could not prevent it, said in her harshest tones, "Linda, go and bring your music."

But Mademoiselle Dubois informed her Ladyship that Miss Linda could play quite as well without the notes; and Linda, without the slightest hesitation, sat down to the piano.

She commenced evidently quite in her element at the instrument, and after having for a few minutes swept the chords in a most brilliant manner, as if to show how completely she was mistress of the art, she changed the notes to the symphony of an Italian song. By some strange fatality, it

happened to be one in which her mother had most excelled ;—not that it was one of that mother's most artistic performances, calculated to show forth the greatest powers of her skill, and the compass of her unrivalled voice, but a composition of exquisite pathos, to which no person could give full justice but one who really possessed the very soul of music.

Lord Sinclair was still seated by the work-table, which faced the pianoforte. No sooner had Linda struck the first chords, than he felt that the daughter was the true child of her talented mother, and he listened with delight to that clear touch and agile finger. But when the girl suddenly changed from the elaborate, rather noisy piece which she had commenced, to the pathetic prelude of the song which followed, the remembrance of her who used to charm his boyish fancy into Elysium by

the delicious sweetness of her voice, recalling so vividly to his mind those happy, bygone days of youth, and that Rosalinda so beloved—those feelings which had never been surpassed in joy, by the pleasures of maturer age—irresistibly touched the heart of Lord Sinclair. And as the song proceeded, and the girl's voice, immatured as it still was, rang forth notes so perfectly similar in tone to those of the enchantress of old, he scarcely knew how to restrain the emotion which seemed determined to unman him.

And Linda, as he now furtively looked at her whilst she sang,—there darted again on her young face the same look of resemblance to her mother which had before flashed upon him.

Whilst she poured forth her song, aught else seemed to be forgotten ; her whole soul was in her singing. No abject fear made

the clear voice falter, though its tones accorded with every word in which, with the perfect enunciation of her silvery mother-tongue, she poured forth the woes it expressed.

Every listener in the room that night was spell-bound and entranced, save, perhaps, Mademoiselle Dubois, who alone was perfectly cognizant of the surpassing powers of her pupil. But even she had never heard her sing in that manner before.

Lady Sunderland was actually in tears; and even Lady Elizabeth's hard nature was softened. Rosalinda, the loved by all, was before them in imagination; not her child.

"Well done, little one!" Lord Sunderland exclaimed; "that was indeed your mother's own voice," he added, with some emotion in his tone, "and that's saying a great deal; for never did I hear singing

to equal hers. Now give us another song, but let it be a livelier ditty, pray."

And Linda instantly obeyed.

"*Il Segreto per esser felice*," she commenced.

But Lord Sinclair, who had sat immovable, his elbows on the table, his face shaded with his hands, did not seem desirous of hearing any more; perhaps he was loath to break the charmed illusion in which his fancy was rapt by that last most beautifully pathetic strain, for he rose from his seat and soon left the room.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

LINDA retired to bed that night in a state of exultation she had never before felt. She was well aware what a sensation her singing had excited. Even Lady Elizabeth looked less harsh when she wished her good night ; and Lady Sunderland,—how kindly she had kissed her, and with tears, too, in her eyes ! Certainly it was for her mother's sake ; however, that only more gratified the girl's heart.

“ *Povera madre !* ” she cried, “ you have indeed left me an excellent gift. And Lord Sinclair,—I am sure he liked it,

although he would not stay to hear *Il Segreto*."

Linda had never heard that her mother had been an Opera singer; the fact had been most carefully kept from her knowledge by the Sunderland family, and the old aunt had been instructed by them not to enlighten her upon the point. There was no advantage to be gained by her knowing it. Her father's position placed his daughter in so different a grade, that it was as well to keep this truth in oblivion; and not even Mademoiselle Dubois was aware of the circumstances attending her pupil's parentage, excepting that her mother was by birth an Italian. And thus it was she argued that Linda possessed such wonderful vocal powers.

\* \* \* \* \*

From this time may be dated another epoch in Linda's life.

Lord Sinclair had indeed been more than delighted with her performance. Once having heard her, he had no intention that it should be the only time.

"Elizabeth," he said, "I am to be here only a week longer, and during that time I beg you will give Linda a holiday from her graver studies, and let us have a great deal of music. Her voice is enchanting, even now : what will it be hereafter, when she has had first-rate instruction ?"

"I do not wish it to be improved. Linda will not require it professionally; and if any fuss is made about her singing, it will only prove a snare to the girl. I shall not allow her to exhibit again," was the tart reply.

"And do you therefore mean to insist, Elizabeth, with that superb organ with which God has gifted her, she is not to use it for the gratification of her friends ?

Well, all I can say is," Lord Sinclair continued, in great indignation, "that I never heard anything so absurd in all my life. You know how passionately fond I am of music; and, with such a performer in the house, to be debarred from hearing her— And for what purpose, I should like to know? A preposterous whim of your own!"

"Sinclair, I am not accustomed to be spoken to in this manner," Lady Elizabeth exclaimed, white with anger.

"I know you are not," her brother replied, now determined to have his own way, and to carry his point *volens volens*; "and really it would be better for the happiness of many if others of the family had always been more free-spoken: and I tell you plainly, Elizabeth, that I cannot imagine why you should arrogate such entire authority over that girl. It was my mother who promised poor Rosalinda, on her death-

bed, to befriend her child—not you. I have just as much right to interfere with Linda as you can have—I, the dearest friend her mother ever possessed.”

A sneering smile of rage was the only reply.

“And, moreover,” Lord Sinclair hurriedly continued, “to cut the matter short, if I am to be refused, in this ridiculous manner, the pleasure I have been contemplating of hearing more of the girl’s music, I shall certainly take myself off at once. I intended to stay ten days longer; but if my home is to be made thus disagreeable, I shall rid you all of my presence at once.”

Lady Elizabeth was confounded. Never before, during the course of her indulged life, had she been thus paid off in her own coin. Her brother threatening to leave the house, and she the cause; this only

brother, so beloved by his parents, who had been so long absent on the Continent! What was she to do? Could she condescend to give way? Oh, yes, she must; for Lord Sinclair, with a very angry brow, had risen, and was striding towards the door. "He will go to my father and mother, and tell them that he is going, and I the cause," she mentally exclaimed, and then said, hurriedly—

"Sinclair, don't be so absurd. What is it you want?"

He stopped short; and seeing, by her crestfallen countenance, that he had won the day, more gently said: "I only wish to hear a great deal of that little girl's singing and playing, and to accompany her songs; in short, to have my fill of her delicious voice, so like her mother's."

"Well, on your shoulders rest the blame, if Linda, with whom I have had no end of

trouble, is irretrievably spoilt. Of course, if you insist I must give way; and you will, I hope, please to remember that, though we all certainly loved and admired her, poor Rosalinda was after all an *Opera singer* !”

And so saying she left the room.

“ Yes, poor Rosalinda, I did love and admire you !” apostrophised Lord Sinclair when the door had closed, “ and your child shall be to me as a little daughter.”

\* \* \* \* \*

And now again, as in days long past, melody resounded at all times of the day in that large mansion. Lord Sinclair was a genuine lover of music; it was, to speak in metaphor, meat and drink to him — had truly become the ruling passion of his existence, absorbing to an inordinate degree his thoughts and actions. Lord and Lady Sunderland sometimes looked upon

this mania of their only son with suspicion and regret.

It drew him out of his own position, causing him to associate too freely with professionals. They were always trembling for the consequences.

Before Lord Sinclair left Bellemont, which now he really did with regret, he not only spoke seriously to Lady Sunderland, upon the subject of some change which ought to be made in the system pursued with regard to Linda, but also encountered a fierce disquisition with Lady Elizabeth, and really proved partially successful, insomuch that she consented to the proposal that Linda, who would then be within a few months of seventeen, should accompany the family to London in the spring, and have a good singing-master. In the meantime for the sake of her manners, he insisted, she should be brought



more into society, and treated less as a child.

"Linda must soon," he added, "be introduced to her relations; and it would not be very creditable to your training, Elizabeth, if you presented to them a girl who sat like a post in the drawing-room, evidently frightened to open her lips."

"I have seen her perfectly at her ease talking to you, Sinclair," was the offended reply; "and I do not admire boldness in any girl."

"Nor do I; but I advocate ladylike ease of manner, not a constrained demeanour, which does not savour of having lived in good society. In short, Elizabeth, I am quite sure you understand what I mean, and will act accordingly."

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE aspect of affairs from this time certainly assumed a far pleasanter form for Linda. Lady Elizabeth felt that the reins of government were slipping by degrees from her hands.

Poor woman! the time had been when nothing could have wrested them from her tenacious grasp; but her health, always feeble, was beginning totally to give way. She had been seized with one of her fits of illness, and was ordered by the physician perfect rest from all excitement. This was a favourable opportunity for changing in some degree the school-room system.

Lord Sunderland, delighted with Linda's equestrian powers, bought a beautiful lady's horse for her sole use, and was pleased and proud to have her for the companion of his rides. Linda, charmed with her perfect steed, nevertheless, at first, would have sometimes preferred her harum-scarum scampers upon the dear pony, over hill and over dale, to the *posé*, ladylike canters with the old Lord ; still, she soon began to like them very much, and it dawned upon her quick perception, that, as she was really a young lady, it was just as well to comport herself as such.

And now she and her governess joined the late dinners, when the party was small, Lady Sunderland often taking her in the carriage to pay visits.

This was all according to the directions Lord Sinclair had laid down for the improvement of Linda's manners and address ; and

the kind lady might at this time have entirely won the girl's love and confidence, if she had not still been under the influence of Lady Elizabeth's reiterated entreaties, yea, even commands, that she should not spoil the girl by too great indulgence, causing often a stiffness of demeanour towards Linda, which she was far from feeling.

March arrived, and the family removed to Carlton Gardens, Lady Elizabeth still so suffering an invalid, that, almost immediately after her arrival in London, the doctor ordered her to the milder air of Torquay, where she went, accompanied by careful attendants and an intimate friend. And now Linda began to enjoy herself most thoroughly. The novelty of all around was most delicious excitement, and she greatly delighted in the lessons in music and singing which she received from first-rate professors.

Linda's appearance had wonderfully improved. Though not tall, her height was sufficient to be graceful; her head and face were very small and well-shaped, her eyes dark and brilliant. She certainly inherited more of her Italian mother's looks than those of the Lawless family,—her complexion, of the pale-olive tint so indigenous to the southern blood, only requiring colour to light it up into beauty,—and her teeth, when she smiled, dazzling in their whiteness.

Looking at Linda unmoved and uninterested, no one would remark her good looks; but speak to her, touch a chord which vibrated at her heart, and there came a bright gleam over the countenance, illuminating the whole of the little face with strange, fascinating sweetness. So we believe it had been with her mother—an enchantress, without the aid of downright beauty.

And now that the weight of Lady Elizabeth's presence had been removed, the sullen, inexpressive look was gone. It was like a new world to the girl, the life she was now leading,—so happy she felt, and free,—and she could talk and chat to every one,—sing unrestrainedly, like an uncaged bird. She practised diligently, and two motives incited her to redoubled exertion.

That dear, good, kind Lord Sinclair, he was returning home; and — and Norman, oh! where was he? But he must come soon now, and then he would hear what she could do.

Lord Sinclair did soon arrive, and then things went on even more pleasantly than before. He was delighted with her improvement, attended every singing lesson, and, to crown it all, proposed that she should go constantly to the Opera, and to many

of the best concerts, insisting, moreover, upon some important changes in her dress.

"My dear mother," he said, "Linda is no longer a child; you really must dress her a little better."

"What would Elizabeth say," Lady Sunderland replied, "if we ventured to make any changes? I can assure you she chose all her things before she left town, and would be very angry if she thought her particular directions were not obeyed."

"I am sorry to hear it," Lord Sinclair persisted, "for I am quite determined to infringe her orders. Linda cannot appear in the evening dressed in those dowdy high bodies, or whatever you call them. I beg, mother, you will order her two pretty dresses: they must be white, and as simple as you please; but only let them be made by a fashionable mantuamaker, and of the

proper shape for a girl of her age. I'll pay for them,—you know I have constituted myself her guardian."

Who can describe the intoxicating delight of the Opera to this child of a gifted mother? From the first note of the orchestra to the last, Linda had no eyes or ears for anything else, — scarcely looked around at the brilliant scene, or the striking occupants of the boxes.

During the intervals of the acts, her eyes were busied with her book of the opera, looking on what was to come, and referring back to what had hitherto been sung, inwardly going over passages which she had just heard so artistically performed.

Linda little knew or heeded that, whilst she sat there absorbed, her small, classically-formed head, unadorned save by its own beautiful soft dark hair, the profile of her face, as she leant over her book, alone per-



ceptible, underwent the usual ordeal of the opera-glasses, always levelled at every box, particularly when it contained something new and young.

"What have you been staring at for the last ten minutes?" exclaimed a young man in one of the stalls to his neighbour, who occupied the one next to him; "I see nothing attractive in that direction."

"I see something that, at all events, puzzles me. Look at that girl in the third box from the stage, in the first tier, and tell me if you have ever seen any one at all like her?"

The first speaker looked fixedly for a moment or two through his opera-glass, in the direction indicated, and then exclaimed—

"By Jove! it really must be my queer little cousin; and, by-the-bye, there is Sinclair by her side, and she lives with the Sunderlands. But I can scarcely believe

it can be her: she must be most marvelously improved. I will go and pay my respects to the little thing — only I hope we shall not have a scene.”

And he rose, and was elbowing his way out of the stalls with the intention of going at once to Lady Sunderland's box, when his progress and intentions were arrested by seeing a radiant creature enter a neighbouring one, and who, even before she had taken her seat, had spied him out, and with the brightest of smiles allured him in a moment to her side, instantaneously effacing from his mind all remembrance of the pale little cousin who was seated almost in the next box. However, the next day, when he saw Lady Curraghmore, almost his first words were, “Do you know that Rosalinda Lawless, my cousin, is in London at this moment? I saw her last night at the Opera, with Lady

Sunderland ; pray, do you intend to take any notice of her ?”

“What ! — do you mean the Opera singer’s daughter ?”

“I mean my father’s niece, my uncle’s daughter, and my cousin,” the young man answered resolutely, and not very respectfully, staring at his mother.

“Where is my father ?” he continued ; “I must go and tell him about it, and ask him when he will go with me to see her ; for if she has been thought good enough for the Sunderlands to treat as their own child, I conclude she is worthy of some little attention from us.”

“Norman, you are always so impetuous — in such a hurry about everything. Pray, did I ever say that I did not intend to notice the girl ?”

“Then why have you not done so before ? Did I not ask you to show some sort

of kindness to her three years ago? But, pray, what have you done? I am absolutely ashamed of my father. His own niece—and to allow her to exist on the kindness of strangers!”

“The girl has some little money of her own,” urged Lady Curraghmore.

“Not sufficient, I am sure, to bring her up as they have done—no pains nor expense spared.”

“More absurd of them,” her Ladyship remarked, spitefully.

“That’s nothing to the purpose,” the dutiful son persisted. “Now, just tell me at once, Lady Curraghmore, what you intend to do in this business, and then I shall form my own plans.”

“Do!—why, of course I intend to call on Lady Sunderland.”

“Well, what next?”

“That will depend upon circumstances.

Perhaps if I do not disapprove of the looks and manners of your cousin, I may ask her to spend the day in Grosvenor Square. I should hope your sisters' minds and principles are now sufficiently formed, to allow them to associate with one brought up so differently from themselves."

"Well, if this is really to be the case, I can postpone my visit until I return from Windsor next week; but recollect, mother, I expect you will not fail in calling upon Rosalinda to-day." And so saying, Norman Lawless left his mother chafing over her defeat, and making up her mind to dislike without reserve her husband's orphan niece.

## CHAPTER XX.

It was in the interval which intervenes before a large dinner party that Linda was at length introduced to her relations.

Lady Curraghmore had called in Carlton Gardens, and Lady Sunderland had taken Linda with her to return the visit; but Fate had been against their meeting. An invitation to dinner was consequently despatched from Lord and Lady Sunderland, at a very brief interval, to Lord and Lady Curraghmore and their daughters, for the purpose of meeting their niece and cousin. The son, they heard, was at Windsor.

For the first time Linda was to join a

regular dinner party, and, with a beating heart and in a state of nervous excitement, then she prepared to make her toilette.

What was her delight to find, on entering her room, a pretty new dress for the occasion! It was only white muslin, but exquisitely made. She was in the midst of rapturous exclamations of admiration whilst examining this, to a young girl's mind, most delightful acquisition, when Lady Sunderland entered the room.

"I have brought you this to wear, dear Linda," she said, putting into her hand a red morocco case; "it is an ornament your mother much prized."

Linda eagerly opened the box, and beheld a small Maltese cross of diamonds.

"Oh, how beautiful!" she exclaimed, as the rich gems flashed upon her sight.

"*Povera madre!* and she wore it!" the girl murmured.

"Yes, it was her favourite ornament," Lady Sunderland replied. "I have many other trinkets belonging to you, Linda, more valuable than this one, but I am keeping them until you require such things. They are safer with me than with you just now. Here is a piece of velvet, to which you must hang the cross round your neck. You like your dress, I hope, and I think you will look very nice. Fanny," she said, turning to the maid, who was in waiting, "I hope Miss Lawless's hair will be well done. I am anxious, you see, Linda, to present you under as favourable an aspect as possible to your relations."

And, certainly, Linda never looked so well as when she presented herself in Lady Sunderland's dressing-room for inspection, before she descended with her into the drawing-room. Excitement had lighted up and given a glow to her pale complexion—



the only thing required to make her pretty. Her beautiful soft dark hair had been simply but perfectly *coifféd*, displaying its exuberance without taking from the classic smallness of her head.

In her white dress, the diamond cross glittering so brilliantly on her bosom, as she stood before the lady, conscious that she was looking well, her eyes drooping, a half smile of pleasure on her lips,—Lady Sunderland gazed upon her young *protégée* with a degree of admiration which seemed almost incredible.

Could this be the Linda of old,—that dark, sullen, plain little girl? and now, how—yes, she must say, almost lovely, she looked.

“Sinclair,” she cried, as she heard his step pass the door, on his way downstairs, “come here.”

Lord Sinclair entered the dressing-room, holding a bouquet in his hand.

“Linda!” he exclaimed, really startled by the apparition. “Well, upon my word, my Lady, you have done the thing *à merveille*. She is exactly dressed as she ought to be—neither too much nor too little. How well her dress fits! Nothing like a French hand for knowing exactly what suits every different age, size, and look. And that cross!” he continued; “how well I remember it! Dear — ever dear Rosalinda!” he murmured, almost inaudibly. “But,” he added, endeavouring to chase the gloom which always gathered over his feelings when he thought of his departed friend, “I have, you see, thought of an indispensable addition to a young *débutante’s* dress,—this bouquet;” and he presented to the delighted, grateful girl a magnificent one, entirely composed of white flowers, which was placed in a pretty holder.

“Now, Linda, you are armed *cap-à-pied*,

and need not fear the tremendous aunt. I think she would not mind exchanging you for one of her daughters. I met her the other day,—sat by her at dinner,—tried, for your sake, to get on with her, but

‘never a word would she say.’

“But my uncle?” Linda asked, as, leaning on Lord Sinclair’s arm, they descended to the drawing-room.

“Oh! he is not at all formidable, but seems most good-natured, and is still one of the handsomest men in London.”

“Ah!” thought Linda, “I suppose that is the reason Norman is so handsome.”

The Curraghmores, according to agreement, were the first to arrive; so that the introduction was performed in stately privacy. Lady Curraghmore, a most uncongenial-looking woman, now on her best behaviour, standing slightly in awe of the

Sunderlands, was prepared to receive Linda graciously enough for her, but was rather thrown back by finding her so much better-looking than she expected. The description her son had formerly given of his cousin, as she was when he had met her in the Highlands, was not certainly flattering; and she had expected to find a dowdy, plain-looking girl, whom she might patronise *ad libitum*. But when this graceful-looking girl, dressed so beautifully, was presented to her so affectionately by Lady Sunderland, her feelings took quite a different turn,—it was now black jealousy which assailed them.

However, she was obliged to give her a cold finger, and then submit to seeing her hugged in a warm embrace by her more demonstrative husband, whose warm-hearted Irish feelings were at this moment brought forth at the recollection that this

pretty creature was poor Valentine's child—his only brother. Oh! how this embrace warmed the orphan's heart!—her own uncle, and Norman's father! So like Norman, too—only so much darker. What cared she for that disagreeable woman or her daughter, who put out her cold hand so grudgingly to her?

She was all smiles and happiness, receiving encouraging looks from all those good friends who had been to her, indeed, she now began to feel, the kindest protectors.

More guests now flocked in, and she was desired by Lady Sunderland to seat herself by her cousin. She obeyed, and endeavoured to draw the young lady into conversation, but in vain; scarcely could she abstract from her even the easy monosyllable "Yes," or "No."

Linda rather enjoyed the time dinner

lasted. She was seated by the side of a most agreeable old gentleman, whom she soon discovered to be a devoted enthusiast of music. Mr. Vernon had heard from Lord Sinclair much of the great talent of his young neighbour, and was looking forward to the treat he had been promised in the evening, of hearing her sing.

So they got on well. Mr. Vernon retained vivid remembrances of "La Rosalinda," and looked with much interest upon her daughter, whose expressive countenance brought her image so strikingly back to his mind.

"You are like your mother," he said.

"I am so glad," she replied. "Then you knew her?"

"Yes," he said, "I knew her. She was charming as a woman, and perfect as an *artiste*."

"Then you often heard her sing?"

"Of course I did. When did I ever miss hearing her, if I could possibly help it?"

"What does he mean?" Linda began to cogitate; but at the moment her eyes met those of Lady Curraghmore, which were fixed upon her. This caused a revulsion in her system, which for the moment put to flight the sort of confusion of ideas which Mr. Vernon's speech had occasioned, and she thought, "Can that sinister-looking woman be really Norman's mother?"

It was indeed uphill work when the ladies returned to the drawing-room.

Lady Curraghmore scarcely spoke to Linda, who thought herself obliged, by the ties of consanguinity, to devote herself to Miss Lawless. In vain she strove to elicit a spark of intelligence from her;—there she sat, immovable.

She was a plain, tall, white-looking girl, with red hair.

Norman's sister! Yes, and there was even a most provoking sort of family likeness to her handsome brother; dreadful, the idea, but so it really was.

At length Lady Curraghmore had, at some one's suggestion, gone into the next room to examine some piece of *virtù* just brought from Italy by Lord Sinclair, and the girls were left alone. And then Miss Lawless turned suddenly to Linda and said, in a voice, which was strongly impregnated by a Scotch accent,—strangely, we may say, as all their governesses had been English and foreign,—“You need not trouble yourself to talk to me; Mamma does not choose that I should be intimate with you.”

“Oh! why not?” asked poor Linda, much shocked.

“Can't you guess?” the young lady re-



plied. And perhaps she was about to say that Lady Curraghmore did not wish *her* daughters to be intimate with the daughter of an Opera singer, when the lady's return to her former seat put a stop to the conversation. However, Lady Curraghmore, being engrossed in some earnest conversation with a Dowager, no doubt pouring into her ear the story of her perplexities concerning her Lord's objectionable niece, Miss Lawless again spoke, though in a low tone, and without moving a muscle of her countenance, so that, should her mother turn suddenly round, she could not suspect her of the act of talking. She murmured, "Norman told us to talk to you,—to be kind to you. How can we do either the one or the other? And as for kindness, you don't seem to want for any. I should be glad to change places with you."

"Did he say so?" exclaimed Linda,

highly delighted. "How good of him! Oh! tell me, when do you think I shall see him again?"

But not a word more was to be elicited. Lady Curraghmore had ceased to speak, and her daughter's statue-like figure remained unmoved.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE gentlemen now entered the drawing-room, and Lord Curraghmore immediately sought out his niece, and, seating himself by her side, fortified by his dinner and wine against the frowns of his lady, poured forth more than ever, vehement protestations of his delight at beholding her.

“I hope, Margaret,” he said, turning to his daughter, “that you have taken the advantage of thus making your cousin’s acquaintance.”

But Margaret replied not a word.

“We must get you down to Lough Rea this summer — must we not? By-the-bye,

you saw Norman there some long time ago?"

"Oh, yes!" Linda answered, "and I am so anxious to see him again! He was so good and kind to me!"

"Well, and I can answer for his being quite as kind and good to you now." And the uncle looked with real affection on his niece. "He will be in London immediately," Lord Curraghmore continued; "we almost thought he would have been in time to have come with us to-day."

Norman Lawless had indeed reached Grosvenor Square that evening; and, hearing from his sister where the rest of the party had gone, determined to join them later. He really felt some curiosity to see his strange little cousin again. "Well, Isabella," said Norman Lawless, as he appeared before his sister on his way downstairs to his cab, "what did my Lady

think of this introduction to little Rosalinda?"

"To judge by her temper," was the daughter's answer, "she certainly did not think pleasantly on the subject; I am glad that it was Margaret's turn, instead of mine, to go out. As for this cousin of ours, she'll not be much the better for an introduction to her relations. Margaret was ordered not to speak a word to this daughter of an Opera-singer."

The young man uttered something too like an execration to be recorded.

"It is quite impossible that we can be kind to her as you desire," Isabella continued; "we dare not do otherwise than obey our mother, servile-like slaves as we are."

"Yea, poor wretches, you have certainly your necks well under the yoke! Thank Heaven, I am a man; and I suppose even as a boy, I had the moral courage to shake

off her Ladyship's trammels, for I should like to see her attempt to crush me." And so saying, he departed, filled with all the vain glory of a young man who through life had always the ball at his feet.

Music had commenced at Carlton Gardens when young Lawless ascended the spacious staircase leading to the drawing-rooms.

The sound of a beautiful voice fell upon his ears as he advanced through the first apartment, which was empty, every one having evidently crowded into the next, from which the music issued.

Captain Lawless, desiring the groom of the chambers not to interrupt the music by announcing him, did not issue through the folding-doors. He was passionately fond of music, and the exquisitely-toned notes which gushed forth so artistically, pouring forth a song so well known, and

yet which never palls upon the senses — he would fain listen in the repose of that deserted apartment.

“Whom have they got here to-night, I wonder?” he thought, as he approached nearer to the folding-doors, from whence he could look into the music-room without being recognised. “I do not know that voice. What a fresh, lovely thing it is! —something new, I suppose. Sinclair is always picking up unknown stars. Holloa!” he exclaimed, *sotto voce*, as he gained a full view of the performer, “who the devil is that?” And for a moment or two he held his breath between wonder and doubt.

“By Jove, it is her! No. Can it be that ugly little imp turned into such a lovely girl? It cannot really be my cousin! Yet now I see it all: those bright eyes flashing as she sings, and that look coming over her face which made her even rather

pretty then, when she turned so adoringly to me, and the moonbeams lighted up her dark face. Good Heavens, what a voice!"

And Norman leant against the wall, perfectly enraptured.

Linda was certainly singing her very best. Lord Sinclair, determined to show off her powers to the very utmost, had engaged her singing master, the famous Signor L——, to accompany her. He was anxious that Mr. Vernon, so scientific a connoisseur, should not be disappointed after having heard so much of Linda's vocal powers; and he who used to be such a worshipper of her mother's voice.

Linda had gladly obeyed his summons to the instrument. Singing was, to her, second nature; she sang with as little trouble as she spoke; she had no feeling of timidity in doing that which was so pleasant, so natural to her; and too re-



lieved was she to escape from her stiff position by the side of Margaret Lawless, Lady Curraghmore's eyes so often turned upon her with anything but pleasing contemplation.

"You must come into the next room and hear Linda sing, Lady Curraghmore," said Lord Sinclair, offering her his arm to take her to a commodious position; and her Ladyship was led forth with anything but harmony at her heart, followed by her daughter.

Good, kind Lord Sinclair, with all your best intentions, this was a most impolitic act. Could you not at once have seen that there was no music in the soul of that hard-countenanced woman, and have guessed that, with all her proud, and, at the same time, narrow-minded Scotch prejudices, any circumstance which tended to revive, in her mind, the origin of her hus-

band's niece would be injudicious in the extreme ?

But the Sunderlands, one and all, were rather infatuated upon the subject of music, and their love for the memory of Rosalinda, had quite obliterated from their ideas anything derogatory, in the position of one so super-excellent as a woman, so talented as an *artiste*. That any one should despise her innocent young daughter never entered their amiable imaginations; all they thought at the moment, was to gratify her relations by displaying the vocal powers of their niece. Therefore Lady Sunderland took her seat by Lady Curraghmore, never doubting her participation in the pleasure that every one must derive from the beautiful song, which was about to be sung.

It was not half finished when Norman took up his post by the door in the

adjoining room, and his eyes at once made a rapid survey of all the party there assembled. He saw his father drinking in with unfeigned delight the clear liquid strains of Linda's voice; and his mother!—

It was indeed a mistake in that instance to say that

“Music has charms to soothe the savage breast.”

In Lady Curraghmore's case, the sweet sounds seemed rather to rouse the demon which resided there; and Norman knew exactly what was passing in her mind as she looked at the poor girl—so young, so artless, and now so pleasant, he thought, to gaze upon. He thought, how merciful it is for her that she has such friends in the Sunderlands! for how would she have fared had she only to rely upon the “tender mercies” of my mother?

And then the young man gave himself up wholly to the delight of the music.

Norman Lawless was not entirely devoid of softer feelings. The beautiful and pathetic composition which Linda sang, softened his heart towards the poor girl, as there she stood, in her white-robed innocence, exposed to the ruthless gaze of his mother.

But Linda was at this moment no object of pity. The song soon ended, and she was the cynosure of every eye; all, save his mother and sister, crowded around her to offer their meed of praise and of congratulation — Mr. Vernon more emphatic than all in his eulogium, although he only said, "You are indeed your mother's child."

Lord Sinclair looked proud indeed; and Lady Sunderland, advancing towards Linda, kissed her affectionately, and this example was immediately followed by Lord Curraghmore, who, with much warmth, and all the

emphatic intonation of his own country, exclaimed as he fervidly embraced her —

“ And indeed you are a sweet singing bird, my own darling little niece ; and you must let us have another song, for I have not had half enough of that voice of a real angel.”

“ And I hope *you* are pleased with Linda’s singing ?” asked Lady Sunderland, turning to Lady Curraghmore, who had risen from her seat.

“ Oh, I dare say it is all very fine, but I do not consider myself qualified to judge of opera-singing in a drawing-room ; and, indeed, Lady Sunderland, to tell you the truth, it is rather painful to be reminded of my lord’s niece’s antecedents. But I must wish you good night,” she continued, to the amazed Lady Sunderland, to whom this bitterly spoken outbreak was quite unexpected ; “ we are going to Lady L——’s ball, and she begged me not to be late. Come,

Margaret: your father, *of course*, will not accompany us."

And the lady, after making a low courtesy, stalked away, almost touching her son with the ample skirts of her dress as she passed close to him, but with her head thrown too high up in the air to perceive his vicinity, he certainly trying as much as possible to make himself invisible behind the folds of the *portière* of the folding-doors.

Margaret at once spied out her brother, but a significant look from him soon conveyed to her his intention of being *incog.*; and a moment after, the coast being clear, he issued forth to join the party congregated round the elated and highly-delighted young songstress.

She saw him not till he was close beside her, and a voice had whispered in her ear—

"Will not the mountain kelpie speak to her cousin?"

Linda started and looked round, but no rapturous greeting such as he had expected from her ensued. Deadly pale she looked as she turned her eyes upon the young man, but she neither spoke nor moved.

"Is this the manner in which you receive me?" Norman said as he eagerly took her hand and affectionately pressed it. "I thought you would be glad to see me again, Rosalinda?"

But still no word passed her lips, which were quivering with emotion.

Yes, the so-longed-for time had indeed arrived. Norman stood before her, and the surprise and joy of the moment were more than she could bear, for, after struggling in vain to subdue her feelings, she burst into tears.

How fortunate that Lady Curraghmore had departed! How would she have construed this scene!—and how would her hatred

towards the young girl have deepened, had she seen her son's impressive manner towards her—how kindly, even tenderly, he who, in his own family, never evinced a spark of natural feeling, soothed poor Linda!—and Lord Curraghmore, the genuine warmth of his nature excited to the utmost pitch, hanging over his niece and fondling her with truly paternal warmth. This nervous outbreak was attributed to the exertion she had made in singing for the first time before so many people. But soon the emotion began to subside, and smiles of the brightest joy chased away her tears. How happy she felt between the two relations her warm heart had received at once, with such perfect faith and love—that uncle who said such kind things, and Norman, who was ten thousand times more charming than even her glowing fancy had imagined him—so handsome, so



good to her. How she soon laughed and talked to him! — they were once again by the river's side at Lough Rea, and the long mountain *trajet* to the Lodge was traversed through all its length.

“Do you remember this?” she cried, as she sprung towards the piano, and broke forth into the song of “Vaga Luna.”

Yes, Norman did recollect the strain. It burst upon his ear with the same pleasurable sensation as when he was first startled by the thrilling voice, which sounded so wonderfully sweet coming from his little strange companion, in the clear atmosphere of the mountain passes.

Linda, now quite herself again, sang afterwards all that was required of her by Lord Sinclair, who had feared that he would not be able to show off her masterpiece to Mr. Vernon; but all went right at last, and the evening ended in a most satis-

factory manner to all parties, save, indeed, to Lady Curraghmore.

"Well, Norman," his father exclaimed, as his son gave him a seat in his cab as far as the Club, "what do you think of my little niece? — is she not a little darling?"

"Yes, a nice little creature she certainly is, and her voice bewitching; but what will my Lady say about her, I wonder? To tell you the truth, I was behind the door, unseen by her, and had an opportunity of watching her countenance, and I could plainly perceive that she was not in love with Rosalinda."

"Oh, yes; bother the woman!" was the conjugal ejaculation. "Her face is enough to turn everything sour. But I'll tell you what, Norman: I am not going to be balked in this matter. The girl is *my* niece, and she shall be received into my house, or I'll leave it for good: sick enough am I of it already."

"But you don't trouble it much with your society even now," laughed the dutiful son.

"No; and could I live and bear more of it? No, not I; and, Norman, take my advice, and whatever you do marry, let her be a pretty woman, and, if possible, a good-tempered one; then, maybe, matrimony will not be such a nauseous pill as I have found it."

Norman laughed again, and said, "Well, it was your own fault. Why did you ever attempt to swallow such a dose? You must have been well aware from the first that my gracious mother was neither pretty nor good-tempered."

"Why did I swallow it? Why, blood and zounds, boy, don't you know that there was no choice left me between matrimony and the Queen's Bench. Oh, many were the wryfaces I made before I could take the physic; but she would have me, and what was a poor beggar to do? Heigho!

I will say this for my Lady, that on the whole, barring the temper, she has been a better wife than I have been a husband."

"Well, I'm glad you have the grace, at least, to confess that, my most respectable of fathers; for, certainly, if my mother has her sins, so have you."

"Oh, yes, upon my soul, Norman; and take heed, by the word of a poor devil, and keep out of them, by marrying in a year or two some girl you can love. As for my Lady Curraghmore, I am always ready to give the devil his due; and certainly she has, by her sharp management, made the Curraghmore property look up, and that will be a good thing for you some of these fine days, my boy."

They had now reached the Club, and Norman set down his father, who probably never left the whist-table till the morning dawned.

## CHAPTER XXII.

THERE was a regular "breeze" in Grosvenor Square the next day—Lord Curraghmore and Norman Lawless *versus* her Ladyship.

Linda, of course, was the subject of dispute. Lord Curraghmore insisted that his niece should become an *habituée* in the house; Lady Curraghmore obstinately rejected the idea of her daughters being mixed up, she said, "with a girl who was an actress every inch of her."

Norman interposed indignantly; took up the cudgels for poor Linda with a violence which certainly savoured little of the respect due to a mother; and his Lordship, backed

by his son, gave loose to a tongue which, when much excited, scorned to make use of any accent save that of his native brogue.

We must remember that his Lordship and his brother had been born and bred in one of the remotest parts of Ireland, receiving no education save that which they picked up *promiscuously*. Valentine had an innate taste for learning and refinement — his elder brother possessed none.

Two against one at last prevailed, particularly as one of the combatants was her son, to whom she had always in a measure succumbed, even from a child; so, to cut the matter short, from this time may be dated Linda's entrance into her father's family.

"You must not mind my mother, Linda," Norman said, by way of preparation; "she is the most disagreeable woman on earth;

not a creature but dislikes and fears her. She will, no doubt, try to make herself as odious as possible to you, but what does it signify? And those two poor wretches of sisters of mine,—it will be impossible to get on very well with them; but it is only right, proper, and natural that you should associate with your own family, and not be entirely indebted to the Sunderlands for a home. Promise me not to take to heart anything my mother may say or do, but to be deaf and blind when you are with her, and my father and I will support you whenever we can."

And Linda promised to obey her cousin. What cared she for anything, so he was by to cheer her with his smile?

And so it went on, that she was often in Grosvenor Square, hardening herself as much as possible to her aunt's repellent reception, and her two cousins' cold manners.

Not only did Isabella and Margaret tremble under the yoke of their mother's displeasure, should they relax in their distant conduct towards their cousin, but, imbibing her spirit and example, they really disliked Linda. Her superior attractions, her singing, the unwonted fuss their father made about her, and Norman's affectionate manners towards this stranger,—so much more like a brother was he towards her than he had ever been to them,—all this was wormwood to their feelings. But they dared not disobey him, so completely were they also under his spell, when he ordered them to do all they could to make her feel at home in Grosvenor Square, and, above all, warned them at their peril never to talk to her of her mother, the “Opera-singer,” as they sneeringly called her.

So this matter proceeded, Linda enduring much that was most disagreeable,



for the sake of occasional moments of happiness vividly enjoyed in the society of this cherished cousin, and her kind demonstrative uncle, whose cheery voice was music to her ears in the heavy atmosphere of the *triste* mansion in Grosvenor Square.

And Norman Lawless really was very fond of Linda, and gave her as much of his time and thoughts as he could spare from the pursuit which was every day more and more absorbing his every feeling,—the passionate love with which he was influenced towards the brilliant flirt, Car Eversfield.

It was in June that Lord and Lady Sunderland, accompanied by Linda, went to Torquay to see Lady Elizabeth, who was still very ailing, and they remained with her till August, when, hoping that the poor invalid would be able to follow them immediately, the party returned to London, and after a few days were *en route* to Bellemont.

Lady Sunderland was persuaded to visit some friends who resided within a short drive of the Brookwood races, which they invited her to attend with her young friend, Miss Lawless.

And here we bring our readers to the time when Linda, all fresh to the excitement of a scene so completely new to her as the humours of a race-course, was enjoying everything to her very heart's core, being accompanied by Norman (also a visitor at the same house), who, grave and preoccupied as he was at the moment by his absorbing love for Car Eversfield, was still kind in his manner towards her.

It was there that she appeared face to face with one whose influence on her destiny she little could have guessed.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON  
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND  
NEW-STREET SQUARE



